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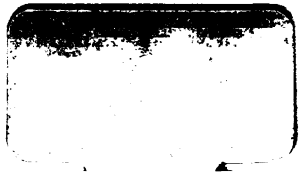

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VERGIL AND THE ENGLISH POETS

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VERGIL AND THE ENGLISH POETS

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A. H. THORNDIKE,
Executive Officer

PREFACE

THIS book has grown out of a long-standing interest in the classics and a feeling that the connection between the literature of Greece and Rome and that of England is too seldom realized and too seldom stressed by the lovers and teachers of both. As Sir Gilbert Murray has said in his recent presidential address to the Classical Association of England, *The Religion of a Man of Letters*, "*Paradise Lost* and *Prometheus Unbound* are . . . the children of Vergil and Homer, of Aeschylus and Plato. . . . Let us admit that there must of necessity be in all English literature a strain of what one may call vernacular English thought. . . . It remains true that from the Renaissance onward, nay, from Chaucer and even from Alfred, the higher and more massive workings of our literature owe more to the Greeks and Romans than to our own un-Romanized ancestors."

Vergil has probably exerted more influence upon the literature of England throughout its whole course and in all its branches than any other Roman poet. At certain periods Horace has taken precedence over him, and at other periods, Ovid; but it is doubtful whether the influence of either has been as far-reaching or as varied as that of Vergil. A discussion of his influence upon the English poets, therefore, will serve as an illustration of that continuity of literature, that *traditio*, of which Sir Gilbert Murray speaks.

I wish to thank those members of the English Department of Columbia University who, by their advice and aid, have made this book possible. I wish to express my appreciation especially of the unfailing kindness of Professor A. H.

Thorndike, who has read the book in manuscript and proof, and has given me much valuable help. Professor William Peterfield Trent also has read it in manuscript and has given me constant assistance. Many helpful suggestions and criticisms, especially on the earlier portions, have come from Professor H. M. Ayres. To Professor Nelson Glenn McCrea of the Department of Classical Philology is due the initial suggestion of the subject. He has never failed, while I have been working on the book, to give me encouragement and advice, and his interpretation of the work of Vergil has been a constant source of inspiration.

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VERGIL AND THE ENGLISH POETS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

FROM the days when Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus wrote epics in imitation of the *Aeneid*, and Columella composed a verse treatise on horticulture after the manner of the *Georgics*, and Calpurnius Siculus copied the Vergilian style and subject-matter in his *Eclogues*, the influence of Vergil upon the literature of the world has been a constant force. Even in this practical, scientific twentieth century, a newspaper editor refers to his *Eclogues* in the heat of a political campaign, the echo of a half-forgotten passage learned in school-days comes back to a soldier in the trenches, an epic poem on the Volsung story is modeled on the structure of the *Aeneid*, and the poet-laureate of England publishes a cento of translations of a brief passage in the sixth book, with a version of his own.

It was to the sheer force of his genius that Vergil owed his long popularity. Neither his personality nor his life would have had sufficient appeal or interest to push forward works that were not of the highest merit. Shy and modest to such a degree that he earned the punning nickname of the Maiden (Virgo), this retiring idealist gave on his deathbed the command that the *Aeneid* should be burnt. Nor did his career have the historical importance of a Caesar or the romantic interest of an Ovid. His was a singularly

uneventful life, as far as we know it. He was born in the little village of Andes near Mantua in the year 70 B.C. His father was a small freeholder, tilling his own fields and raising timber and bees. Here Vergil gained the knowledge which he afterwards turned so wonderfully to account in the *Georgics*. He had, however, the best education possible, first at Cremona, then at Milan, and finally at Rome itself, where he studied rhetoric and philosophy. In the confiscation of land after the battle of Philippi, Vergil, whose father had meanwhile died, lost his little estate, but through the friendship of Pollio, Gallus, and Varus, he was given in compensation land in Campania, and was introduced to Octavianus. About this time, Vergil published his *Eclogues*, which immediately made a stir in the literary world, as the beginning of a new type of poetry in Rome, and the promise of future greatness in the author himself. Outwardly they are imitations of the *Idylls* of Theocritus, and they are cast in the conventional forms of the dialogue between two shepherds, the song-contest in alternate verse with a lamb or a graven bowl as the stake, the complaint of the lover over the hardheartedness or the faithlessness of his mistress, and the lament for a comrade who has died. Into this pastoral form Vergil has woven some personal allegory, in reference to the loss of his estate, the death of Julius Caesar, and the misfortunes of his friend Gallus. The ten poems are marked by a certain artificiality which is a frequent characteristic of imitative and allegorical poetry, and the execution shows the hand of a beginner, but of a beginner of great things. For the promise of the charm of Vergil's later poems is here, especially in the golden light of the fourth *Eclogue* and the romantic atmosphere of the story of the deserted Gallus.

With the publication of the *Georgics* in 29 B.C., Vergil took his place at the head of Latin literature. Their beauty has

perhaps been obscured by the greater glory of the *Aeneid*. But Vergil never proved himself so surely a "lord of language" as he did in dealing with the unpromising subjects of "tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd," and to demonstrate it one has only to turn to him from the awkward dullness of *The Fleece* or *The Chase*. Lucretius put his philosophical teaching into poetry, for he said he must smear the lip of the cup with honey, that the bitter but beneficial dose within it might be made acceptable. So Vergil, commissioned by Augustus to revive in the hearts of the Romans a love for agriculture, put the precepts of husbandry into verse which he had time to bring as near perfection as possible. With a background of the beauty of Italy and the charm of the country, he laid the emphasis on the necessity of unending labor and on its sure reward in actual production and in the strengthening of character as well as of body — a real Gospel of Work.

The splendid digression in the second book of the *Georgics* on the glory of Italy, with its closing apostrophe to the "mighty mother of heroes," strikes the note of Vergil's last and greatest work. The *Aeneid*, begun shortly after the publication of the *Georgics*, occupied the poet's time until his death in 19 B.C., and yet he did not consider it finished. It embodied the best that was in him, his passionate love for his country, his veneration for his emperor, his broodings over the significance and purposes of human life. It inevitably challenged comparison with the great epics of Greece, and incurred the criticism of being a mere imitation. Imitative it indubitably is in mere externals; but the marvel is that from materials and framework originally Greek, Vergil has wrought a poem shot through and through with Roman feeling. Each suggestion from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is reworked with the central purpose of impressing upon the Roman reader the grandeur

of the Rome that had been and the opportunity to make the Rome of the future, built on the solid foundation of her history, even more glorious. So the catalogue of the Italian forces in the seventh book is bound to the story by the element of national pride in these ancestors of the later Roman families; the pictures on the shield of Aeneas are not of a general character like those on the shield of Achilles, but tell the story of the growth of the Roman people; the episode of Dido is not a mere copy of the adventures of Ulysses in the land of the Phaeacians, but is connected vitally with the Punic Wars of later years; the visit to the Underworld gives an opportunity for the prophecy by Anchises to his son of the future glories of the Roman race. Many an episode, such as the landing at Actium and the celebration of the funeral games at Acesta, was designed to set the chords of patriotism vibrating, by reminding its readers of some event in Roman history. And to the men of the Augustan age, Roman history had culminated in the reign of Octavianus, and everything in the poem tends to a glorification of the Julian *gens*. The name of the boy Iulus is a perpetual reminder that Aeneas, the representative of Rome, was the real founder of the family to which the great names of Caesar and Augustus, so highly lauded in the sixth book, had brought honor and renown.

This national appeal is the real message of the *Aeneid*, and yet we who are not Romans can find in it something which still speaks to us after nineteen centuries. It is not only the plea for a higher patriotism. It is the expression of the tenderness of a great spirit, brooding over the cost of human life and the horrors of struggle and warfare, longing for the time of a perpetual *pax Romana;* the expression of his sense of the pathos of existence epitomized in the oft-quoted *lacrimae rerum*, and also of his assurance of the

continual presence of a Deity who is a pervading and guiding force. This is the true Vergilian charm, which both attracts and puzzles one who is seeking a definition of it.

But throughout the centuries it has been the story of the *Aeneid* that has appealed to readers and writers, rather than any philosophical aspect of the poem. The construction of the *Aeneid* is a thing to be reckoned with. Not only have the adventures of Aeneas and the tragic fortunes of Dido won the interest and sympathy of many a man and woman, but the structure of the poem has served as a model for epic poetry from that time to this. While Vergil cannot approach Ovid as a mere story-teller, the dramatic force of single episodes and the unity of the entire narrative are remarkable. While the story cannot begin and end in the same place as does that of the *Odyssey*, the thought of Italy is always before the Trojans, and Troy and Italy are in reality no farther separated than are their names in the first two lines of the poem:

> Arma virumque cano Troiae qui primus ab oris
> Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
> litora.

The story is a fairly simple one. Aeneas and his comrades, fleeing from Troy, are still pursued by the hatred of Juno. They are shipwrecked in a storm which she has caused, and land on the shores of Africa. They are kindly received by Dido, queen of the new city of Carthage. At a feast given in their honor, Aeneas tells the queen the whole story of the last night of Troy, in a most dramatic narrative, which perhaps owes something to Euripides. He also relates his wanderings up to the time of his arrival at Carthage. Meanwhile Venus has inspired Dido with a violent love for Aeneas, which he returns, but at the command of the gods and the summons of his higher destiny, he leaves

her and proceeds upon his way to Italy, whereupon she dies by her own hand. No summary can give even a hint of the dramatic power of the second and fourth books, which tell of the fall of Troy and the death of Dido, and which have been the most read and best loved of all the twelve. Aeneas stops at Sicily and holds games in memory of his father, who had died there the year before. He then proceeds to Italy, and at the command of the gods, visits the Underworld, where he sees his father and learns from him the future glory of his people. Advancing to the vicinity of the future city of Rome, he makes a treaty with Latinus, king of the country, for the hand of his daughter, Lavinia. A feud breaks out, however, between the two nations, stirred up by the Fury Allecto at the command of Juno, and Turnus, Lavinia's former betrothed, joins the opponents of the Trojans. There follows a more or less uninteresting series of battles, with varying fortunes, enlivened by the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, two friends who make a night raid upon the enemy, and by the story of Camilla, the maiden warrior. The war is finally settled by a single combat between Turnus and Aeneas, in which the former is killed and the Trojan wins both bride and kingdom.

Vergil's mastery of the hexameter has never been questioned. It was a great achievement to bring the stubborn Latin language, with its essentially iambic rhythm, into subjection to a meter made up of dactyls and spondees. The work had been begun by Ennius and Lucretius, and was brought to its full perfection by Vergil, a perfection which has never since been equaled. And to many an English reader, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this perfection of the hexameter, added to Vergil's positive genius for finding the right words, has appealed as his greatest beauty. The liquid smoothness of the *Eclogues*,

the finished charm of the *Georgics*, and the stately harmonies and rhythms of the *Aeneid* have kept for Vergil his place as the greatest of Latin poets, even when his story has temporarily lost its interest or his deeper thoughtfulness has not been understood. And when these other qualities have been uppermost in the minds of his critics, there has rarely, if ever, except in the uncritical periods of literature, been a failure to appreciate the fact that his marvelous power of expression is the chief factor in his preëminence as a story-teller and as a philosopher.

The great variety of Vergil's poetic powers has given him an appeal to men engaged in all branches of literature. The dramatic qualities of the scenes in the second and fourth books of the *Aeneid* have made the fall of Troy and the death of Dido favorite subjects for dramatic representation; the oratorical power of his great speeches gave him a prestige in the schools of the Empire and of the Middle Ages, endeared him to men like Bossuet and Burke, and have made him an "orator's poet." The descriptive powers by which he is enabled to convey not only the appearance of a scene, but also the idea of horror, of weariness, of pathos, of awe and mystery which underlies the mere outward semblance of the death of Priam, of the despair of the Trojan women in Sicily, of the death of Pallas, or of the vision of awful faces on the night of Troy's downfall, have been the admiration and despair of many an imitator and translator. The music of the verse of the *Eclogues*, the perfect smoothness of the *Georgics*, made him the model for English poetry in its Augustan period; and the compactness of phrase and the varied harmonies of the *Aeneid* have influenced masters of rhythm like Milton and Tennyson.

But the subject of this book is not Vergil as he was, or even as modern critics and scholars think he was, but Vergil

as he appeared to and influenced the makers of English literature throughout its history. Its aim is to trace the changes in the reaction to his poetry in the different periods of English literature, and to study his influence especially on the representative poets of England under the varying conditions of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Pseudo-classicism, and Romanticism. The prose, which naturally shows less influence than the poetry, has been treated only incidentally, all the body of pseudo-classic criticism, for instance, being considered very briefly, simply in order to form a background for pseudo-classic poetry.

The Middle Ages, with innate respect for "authority," regarded Vergil with all reverence not only as a great poet, but also as a writer of a volume that might be used as a text-book for grammar and rhetoric. While the ecclesiastics attacked him on the ground of pernicious doctrines, others regarded him as one of the greatest of moral teachers, and even as a prophet of Christ and a propounder of Christian principles. Again, the spirit of romance laid hands upon him, and made of him a worker of magic and of his Aeneas the hero of a tale of chivalry. So this many-sided Vergil, most of whose characteristics were wholly the creation of the Middle Ages, served the turn of every man, cleric or layman, the scholar who wished illustrative examples for his treatise on grammar or metrics, the poet who was looking for a model for his Latin hexameters, or the courtier who was searching for marvelous stories with which to entertain his emperor.

Chaucer inherited much of this mediaeval tradition, especially the desire to make of the *Aeneid* a chivalric romance. The sympathies of the Middle Ages had been chiefly with the deserted Dido, and Chaucer too treated her as one of the "saints of Cupid," a true sister of Ariadne. But Chaucer was ahead of many of his contemporaries in his

actual first-hand knowledge of the *Aeneid*. While he did not display the perspicuity of a Gavin Douglas in seeing Vergil's purpose in writing the story of Aeneas and Dido, neither did he accept the charge of Dares Phrygius that Aeneas was a traitor to his country, nor did he admit such distortions in his story as did Caxton, a century later. He had included Vergil in his reading, unusually wide for his times, and his error was due to misplaced emphasis and biased judgment and not to ignorance.

In the full Renaissance, such errors as those of Caxton were no longer possible. The spread of humanistic learning had brought Vergil into the curriculum of school and university, and it would have been impossible for any of the sixteenth-century translators to have believed that he was rendering the *Aeneid* into English when he was working on the *Eneydes*. The new appreciation of Vergil shown by the writers of the Renaissance on the continent, by Petrarch and his followers in Italy and France, was reflected later in the poetry and criticism of England. The sixteenth century was a period of the development of the pastoral and of the growth of the Renaissance principles of criticism, which have been formulated into a creed by a modern critic, the main tenet of which is, "Taking things on the whole, 'the ancients' have anticipated almost everything, and in everything that they have anticipated have done so well that the best chance of success is simply to imitate them." To this creed subscribed Spenser and his contemporaries, often limiting "the ancients" to little more than Vergil, both in connection with the pastoral, and, more especially, in relation to the epic, although each is tinged with the influence of Renaissance models as well.

The seventeenth century is a period of transition, in which the chief tendency showing the influence of Vergil is the development of the classical epic, under the influence

of the rules of Aristotle and Boileau in respect to form, and the interest in history and the study of the Bible in subject-matter. Towering over all the little men who tried to compose epics was the giant Milton, to whose scholarly appreciation of classic models was united a supreme poetic genius.

With the development of the pseudo-classic theory and practice during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the emphasis came to be placed more and more on the form and style of literary production. It was an age of translation and imitation, and the two greatest names in the poetry of this period were those of Dryden and Pope. It was natural that Pope should admire the sweetness of versification of the *Eclogues* of Vergil, and that he and his followers should try to emulate it by imitating the framework of the poems and copying their phraseology, and giving to their work the same careful polish that Vergil was reported to have bestowed upon his lines. The easiest way to analyze the influence of Vergil, is to consider its effect upon the various poetic *genres*. The other characteristic literary forms of the century besides the pastoral were satire and didactic poetry, and as the former usually took the form of the mock-epic, it afforded further opportunity for Vergilian imitation. When the didactic poetry concerned itself with the country and the occupations of the farmer, it naturally turned to the *Georgics* of Vergil for a model. The greatest of the didactic poets was James Thomson, who appreciated not only Vergil's practical wisdom, but his love of nature and his powers of description, and combined them in the *Seasons*, a poem which had an astonishing and long-continued influence both at home and abroad.

There was little real understanding of the actual spirit and purpose of Vergil until the nineteenth century, when the historical method came to be used in criticism, and

students of the Latin poet endeavored to place him in his environment and determine its effect on him and his influence on it. But in the Romantic period, criticism was too much a matter of personal likes and dislikes to apply the historical method with impartiality. The searcher after truth was too prone to approach a writer with a preconceived idea of what he ought to find there, and then find it. And in this time of zeal for the spontaneous, the unstudied, and the subjective, Vergil fared badly and exerted little influence on English poetry, for he was generally condemned by the one word "artificial." Landor, although he imitated Vergil and greatly admired certain portions of his work, was moved by this romantic spirit of individual criticism, and denounced other parts of his poetry, such as Aeneas' parting words to Dido, as frigid, stiff, in short, artificial.

But as the century went on, the growth of scholarly interest in Vergil and real knowledge of his place in history and the purpose of his work, brought about a change in the attitude of literary men. They still applied the test of personal preference, but although they might prefer some other poet to Vergil, they did not banish him altogether, and he had a recognizable influence on many of the poets of the period to a greater or less degree. None of them seems to have understood or loved Vergil as did Tennyson, and certainly on none of them did he have a greater influence. Tennyson is the last of our poets to have absorbed his Vergil so thoroughly that the Latin poet has become a part of his life and thought. As the horizon of men of letters has steadily broadened, and new interests and problems have taken their attention, inevitably the influence of Vergil as of all the classics upon English poetry has decreased. In the nineteenth century it is necessary to confine the treatment largely to certain men who represent the sympathy or reaction of an individual spirit toward the genius

of the Roman poet. Incidental echoes in the work of other men are of little significance, and consequently call for but brief discussion.

It is difficult to prevent a book of this kind from falling into a mere list of parallel passages from Vergil and the English poets. A certain amount of quotation is necessary, however, to show the extent of any poet's use of Vergilian material, and the manner in which he adapted or assimilated it. But in recording the similarities, I trust I have avoided the pitfall yawning before all commentators, that of carrying the analysis of indebtedness to Vergil too far, so that it verges on absurdity. I hope I have avoided offending the *manes* of Tennyson and moving the shade of Landor to sarcastic laughter. It was Landor who thus ridiculed the attempts of critics to find echoes of the classics in the most unlikely places. In his *Cȩitation of William Shakespeare* he writes, "Master Silas did interrupt this discourse by saying, 'May it please your worship, the constable is waiting.' Whereat Sir Thomas said tartly, 'And let him wait,'" to which the "Editor" has appended the following footnote: "It has been suggested that this answer was borrowed from Vergil, and goes strongly against the genuineness of the manuscript. The editor's memory was upon the stretch to recollect the words: the learned critic supplied them: '"Solum Aeneas vocat." *et vocet oro.*' The editor could only reply, indeed weakly, that *calling* and *waiting* are not exactly the same, unless when tradesmen rap and gentlemen are leaving town."

CHAPTER II

THE MEDIAEVAL TRADITION

THE Vergilian tradition was unbroken by temporary loss of his works or diminution in his popularity. Throughout the Middle Ages, his poems and his personality were powerful factors in the intellectual life of the times. As poet, rhetorician and grammarian, as moralist, prophet, writer of romance and magician, he played a prominent part in the thought of all ranks of men, from the scholar to the peasant.[1] It was Chaucer, inheriting all the gathered reverence of fourteen centuries, who wrote,

> Glory and honour, Virgil Mantuan,
> Be to thy name! and I shal, as I can,
> Folow thy lantern, as thou gost biforn.[2]

Some, like Dante and Chaucer himself, did follow, with only a few deviations from the straight path, but it must be admitted that other eager spirits seized the lantern from the hand of their guide, and ran into all sorts of curious byways and blind alleys, drawing Vergil after them.

The role which Vergil plays today as the greatest of Latin poets was not his most important part in the Middle Ages. With the decline of literature which came in the third and fourth centuries, the influence of his works as poems became a matter of externals only. The form and style and subject-

[1] In this first portion of the chapter I am following the well-known discussion in *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, by Domenico Comparetti.

[2] *Legend of Good Women*: *Dido*. 1–3.

matter continued to serve as models for much of the mediaeval Latin poetry, both pagan and Christian,[3] but the spirit of the master had vanished, or was too much obscured by the mists of grammar and rhetoric which surrounded him to be caught by any of his imitators, even those nearest him in time. A gleam of true poetic appreciation was visible here and there, but mostly in the churchmen who confessed to a worldly love for the *Aeneid* which enticed them from their spiritual duties. The popularity of the story of Dido never waned, and it furnished the subject for numerous stage representations, even in the days of the Roman emperors and also later in the Renaissance, and for tapestries and pictures. Yet one of the chief occupations of the men who studied and knew the poems, was the making of centos, whereby Vergil became the mouthpiece of sentiments by no means his own, and the author of a tragedy of Medea or an epitome of the Old Testament.

Dante, of course, is the great exception to all this, for while his conception of Vergil is in some respects based on the mediaeval ideas, it is lifted far above them by his poetic sympathy and admiration for the *Aeneid*. He is like the mediaeval monk in his tendency to allegorize, and in his belief in the omniscience of Vergil, but the poet nowhere appears in the *Divina Commedia* as a magician, and though he is a Christian in the poem, it is because he has gained since death the knowledge that the gods he worshipped in life were false gods, and the truth is to be found only in Christianity. Dante says that Vergil is his favorite poet, and his constant use of echoes from the Latin proves the fact. Yet he is no servile imitator of Vergil. He brings

[3] The most prominent example is the *Waltharius*, a Latin poem of the tenth century, by Ekkehard, a monk of St. Gall. See Zappert, *Virgils Fortleben im Mittelalter*, for a collection of Vergilian echoes in mediaeval poetry, in Latin and in the vernaculars.

to him the sympathy of one great poet for another, and becomes his interpreter rather than his imitator. Dante, whose patriotism was the ruling passion of his life, recognized no break between the history of Rome and that of Italy, and looked upon the *Aeneid* as the great national poem of his country. His conception of Vergil as essentially a national poet was an important factor in his sympathy for the author of the epic of Italy. It was, then, no mere accident, and no mere compliance with the mediaeval veneration for Vergil which made Dante choose him for a guide. The choice was based upon a love of Vergil which was a fundamental part of his nature. It has been said that to Dante Vergil symbolized the imperial ideal, but even though he was so allegorized, he is at the same time a living figure in the poem, a real personality, if not the true Augustan Vergil, yet something nearer to it than the Vergil of the mediaeval clergy. In this poetic appreciation of the work and personality of Vergil, Dante showed himself a precursor of the Renaissance.

Vergil's popularity among the grammarians began early. Suetonius says that Q. Caecilius Epirota, a freedman of Atticus, was the first to use his poems as textbooks of grammar in his school, and by the time of Nero, Seneca could say, "Grammaticus futurus Vergilium scrutatur." His aptness of phrase delighted the grammarians, and they adopted more illustrations from his poetry than from the works of any other Latin writer. So copious are the quotations in the textbooks of Nonius, Priscian, and Donatus, that, according to Comparetti, it would be possible to reconstruct from them practically the whole of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, if the manuscripts of Vergil had all been lost. It is not strange, therefore, that a grammarian of the seventh century should adopt as his most natural title, the name, Publius Vergilius Maro.

As a rhetorician, too, Vergil's reputation began soon after his own time. Arellius Fuscus, an orator and friend of the elder Seneca, freely adapted Vergil in his speeches. At the beginning of the second century, Annius Florus discussed what had become a popular question in his treatise entitled *Vergilius orator an poeta*. The rhetoricians formed their rules according to his practice, and later Macrobius praised Vergil for having observed the rules of rhetoric. The pupils of the schools throughout the Middle Ages made such extensive use of the poems of Vergil as textbooks, that it is natural that he should have become for them the highest type of grammarian and rhetorician, the ideal *clericus*. As such he appeared in the thirteenth century romance of *Dolopathos*, endowed with the attributes and the official robes of a mediaeval teacher.

In these two aspects, however, the mediaeval Vergil had little effect upon later literature. But as a moral teacher and as a prophet of Christ, his influence was felt even down into the eighteenth century in England, and his fame as a magician, while not so long-lived among the cultured, lingered on through the time of Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Hawes, and on the continent called forth a formal attack from Gabriel Naudé as late as the seventeenth century. It still survives among the people of Italy.

Aelius Donatus, in the fourth century, the first to attribute allegorical significance to the poems of Vergil, found in the three poems, the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, the three stages in man's development, the pastoral, the agricultural, and the martial. Some of the interpretations in the commentary of Servius were of an allegorical nature, such as the famous explanation of the golden branch. The tendency was a persistent one, and natural enough in view of the mediaeval fondness for writing allegory. It afforded opportunity for every sort of extravagance, and the height

of absurdity was reached in the *De Continentia Vergiliana* of Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, who lived not later than the sixth century. He gave an elaborate interpretation of the *Aeneid* as a representation of the progress of the human soul, abandoning the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* as too deep for him to understand. He spoke on the authority of the poet himself, for the shade of Vergil, a gloomy, superior apparition, appeared to him in person and instructed him as to the correct meaning of the epic. Bernard of Chartres carried on the tradition, and Dante in the *Convito* discussed the "allegory of the ages of man contained in the *Aeneid*." John of Salisbury devoted a whole chapter of the *Policraticus* to a detailed analysis of the *Aeneid* as an allegory of the human soul. The notion of a hidden meaning was still strong in the prologues of the several books of Gavin Douglas' translation of the *Aeneid*, and in Spenser's *Letter* to Sir Walter Raleigh.

Rather closely allied to this notion of Vergil as a moral teacher, was the firmly grounded belief that he had prophesied the coming of Christ. The remarkably pure and noble character of his life made people all the more ready to accept the author of the famous fourth *Eclogue* as a pagan Isaiah, especially as the imagery in the two pictures of the reign of peace on earth was so similar. This idea, which persisted far into modern times, in the Middle Ages was one of the most prevalent of the traditions. In the Mystery Plays, Vergil appeared as one of the prophets of the Messiah, and was called upon for his testimony. Sometimes he was regarded as an unconscious witness of the Incarnation, and one well-known legend represents St. Paul at the tomb of Vergil, mourning over his lost opportunity for converting one who was so nearly a Christian, and would have been so, save for the accident of having died too soon.

In spite of these curious perversions of the meaning and purpose of the poems of Vergil, there survived a thorough knowledge of their contents. Even the romances which treat of the Aeneas story and of the life of Vergil were based on a knowledge of the original, although its proportions were rather obscured. These romances are one of the most interesting developments of the mediaeval treatment of Vergil. The story of Aeneas supplied one more subject to the romancers who were busy transforming the adventures of Alexander and the legends of Thebes and Troy into forms more fitted to the ideas of the period. "Classical narratives," says Comparetti, "were compelled to adopt romantic dress to suit the taste of the time." [4] As he very justly points out, this is part of the same tendency which led painters of the Middle Ages to put into their pictures the costumes and surroundings of their own time and country, regardless of the subject. The interest in the Troy material was very great, and was increased by the belief prevalent among the people of western Europe that they could trace their descent from the Trojans. Hence the preference for the narrative of Dares the Phrygian over that of Dictys the Cretan, as the former was written from the Trojan point of view, the latter from the Greek. These two mediaeval Latin prose narratives were the authorities on the subject. Both purported to be translations from contemporary accounts in Greek, and where Homer differed from them, he was considered to be in the wrong.[5] Upon them were based the main versions of the Troy story, the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Saint-Maure, which was translated into Latin prose by Guido delle Colonne, the *De Bello Trojano* of

[4] Comparetti, *Vergil in the M.A.*, p. 242.

[5] Homer was known only in the Latin epitome, the *Ilias Latina* of Baebius Italicus, or "Pindar the Theban."

Joseph of Exeter, and either directly or indirectly, many of the later treatments of this material.

The *Aeneid* of Vergil, being well known and much admired in the Middle Ages, furnished the basis for romances on the story of Aeneas. The *Romans d'Eneas*, a French poem of the twelfth century, the oldest extant version of Vergil's poem in a vulgar tongue, was evidently written by a man who had the *Aeneid* before him. It is far from a literal translation, however, for it expands some incidents, suppresses others, changes at times the order of events, adds long descriptions and accounts of marvels of various kinds, discredits the intervention of the gods, but transforms Dido's priestess into a sorceress, and transports the whole narrative into the atmosphere of mediaeval romance. It does not plunge at once *in medias res*, but begins with an account of the early history and fall of Troy. The most interesting expansion is that of the Lavinia episode. The daughter of Latinus is a mere shadow in the *Aeneid*, but in the *Eneas* she becomes a truly sentimental maiden, who falls in love with Eneas when she sees him from her tower, as he passes along attended by his chevaliers, faints when she fears that he is untrue to her, and shows all the characteristics of a mediaeval love-sick heroine. Eneas too is a model lover. He sighs and groans and takes to his bed in a thoroughly conventional fashion, and manages though pale and wan to appear before Lavinia's tower in time to save her from utter despair at his absence. It all seems like a ridiculous caricature of the *Aeneid*, but the poet had no such intention. He was merely conforming to the romantic ideals of his age.

The *Eneas* was imitated in the German romance, *Eneit*, by Heinrich von Veldeke. In the latter part of the fifteenth century there was another French handling of the story, the *Livre des Eneydes*, translated into English by

Caxton in 1490. All of these show a strong tendency to place undue emphasis on the sentimental, erotic portions of the narrative, and all incur the criticism which Gavin Douglas makes of Caxton's treatment of the Dido episode:

> So that the feird buik of Eneados,
> Tuiching the luif and deith of Dido quene,
> The twa part of his volume deith contene,
> That in the text of Virgill, traistis me,
> The twelft part scars conteins, as ye ma se.[6]

Not only the career of Aeneas, but the life of his creator was recognized as a legitimate subject for romanticizing. In the *Dolopathos*, a Latin prose romance of the thirteenth century, later put into French verse by Herbers, Vergil appears as the mediaeval clerk, philosopher and astrologer, the tutor and guardian of Lucimien, the son of Dolopathos, king of Sicily. The figure of Vergil here is approaching the popular conception of him as a magician; but although he has the power of prophecy through his knowledge of astrology, he uses it, not because of his own magic powers or through any alliance with the Devil, but through the grace of God. It can be easily seen, however, that it is no long step from this conception to that contained in Walter Burley's *Lives of the Philosophers* or the sixteenth century *Lyfe of Virgilius*, which had a French original. The *Dolopathos* belongs to the literary tradition rather than the popular, even containing quotations from the works of Vergil, but it is, as Comparetti says, the "final parody of the literary tradition."[7]

A religious and almost superstitious veneration for Vergil began in the days of Silius Italicus, Statius, and Martial,

[6] Douglas, *Virgil*, Proloug of the First Buik of Eneados.
[7] Comparetti, *Vergil in the M. A.*, p. 238.

who observed his birthday with sacrifices, and honored his tomb like that of a deified emperor. By the time of Macrobius he had attained the dignified position of an infallible authority upon all subjects, including the occult science of astrology. Many apocryphal anecdotes were related in the successive biographies of the poet. Here perhaps was a prophecy of the growth of that extraordinary mediaeval conception of Vergil as a magician.

It is one of the most fascinating phases of Vergilian study, this survival in the minds and affections of the people of the personality of a great poet whose works have always appealed to the educated and cultured. His name, it is said, still finds a place in the folk-stories of Italy and even in the peasant games of Poland. There are various theories as to the origin of the Vergil legend. Comparetti says that it originated in Naples, among the lower classes, and was founded on local records connected with Vergil's long stay in that city and the celebrity of his tomb there. Tunison, on the other hand, holds that it grew out of the linking of Vergil's name with certain legends afloat in Germany, whence they were transferred to Italy. "In effect," he says, "these stories were like blank forms of legal documents which only required a word here and there to fit them for a great variety of uses. Virgil's name was simply one of these accidental strokes, out of many failures that were forgotten, which hit the popular fancy." [8] Graf,[9] taking the middle course, says that the legends were popular in origin, but were connected with the literary legend. This seems the most reasonable view to take of the matter. The legends were certainly firmly established in the popular mind when Conrad of Querfurt and Gervase of Tilbury visited Naples, and brought home accounts of the marvels they found there.

[8] Tunison, *Master Virgil*, p. 96.

[9] Graf, *Roma nella Memoria e nelle Immaginazioni de Medio Aevo.*

It seems natural to suppose that the powers of prophecy and the knowledge of astrology which the Middle Ages assigned to Vergil, as well as the familiarity with magic rites displayed in the eighth *Eclogue* and the intimate acquaintance with the Underworld shown in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, may all have had an effect in fostering the belief that the poet himself possessed magical powers and held intercourse with the Devil.

Whatever their origin may have been, there were many curious legends connected with the name of Vergil, both at Naples and at Rome. He added to the comfort of the former city in many ways, and at Rome he built the wonderful *Salvatio Romae*, the palace or mirror, according to the two forms of the legend, which protected Rome from her enemies. Several of the legends[10] are spoken of in the account of Vergil given by Walter Burley in his *De Vita et Moribus Philosophorum*, adopted with a qualifying *creditur* from the *De Naturis Rerum* of Alexander Neckam. This is a curious mixture of fact and fancy, but it has not reached the pure legend of the sixteenth century *Lyfe of Virgilius*, an English translation of a French story-book, *Les Faits Merveilleux de Virgille*, made by John Doesborcke, and printed by him in Gothic letter with woodcuts at Antwerp. The book is without date, but it probably was printed about 1525 or 1530. The title-page gives an idea of the character of the narrative: "This boke treateth of the lyfe of Virgilius and of his death, and many marvayles, that he dyd in his lyfe tyme by witchcraft and nigromansy, thorough the help of the devylls of hell."

Although Englishmen, such as Gervase of Tilbury and Alexander Neckam, were among the first to give literary expres-

[10] For a full account of Vergil the magician, see Comparetti, *op. cit.*, Part II, Tunison, *op. cit.*, Graf, *op. cit.*, and for the legends current in Italy today, C. G. Leland, *Unpublished Legends of Virgil.*

sion to the legends about Vergil, these stories had comparatively little effect on later English literature. Some of the Middle English versions of the *Seven Sages* connect the name of Vergil with the story of the *Salvatio Romae*, which Chaucer merely alludes to and which Gower relates in full. Gower makes an allusion to one of the magician's love-adventures, which is described by Stephen Hawes. Marlowe, in his *Doctor Faustus*, speaks of his magic power. But there is no trace, as far as I know, of any popular belief in Vergil the magician, as there was in other countries on the continent with which Vergil had had no connection. Merlin, Roger Bacon and Doctor Faustus furnished the necessary support for the English love of the marvelous, and Vergil for the most part, took his true place as a great poet rather than as a great magician.

Inasmuch as scholarship in mediaeval England was almost wholly in the hands of the churchmen, it is to their writings that we must look to find indications of the attitude of the period toward Vergil. The struggle which went on in the minds of the clergy on the continent between their love for the beauties of pagan literature and their abhorrence of its doctrines, was paralleled in England. They recognized the importance of the classics in education as a basis of culture, and could not forget what they had learned in their youth. Like Jerome, they quoted Vergil on one page and inveighed against him on another. Alcuin, who had loved the Mantuan in his youth, later instructed his pupils not to read him. Yet his own letters were full of Vergilian echoes. Herbert, Bishop of Norwich, told of a dream in which Christ appeared to him and reproved him for his affection for the classical writers. St. Odo had a vision in which he saw a vessel, very beautiful to look upon, but full of poisonous serpents. When he awoke, he realized

that the vessel represented Vergil, and the serpents were the pernicious doctrines contained in his poems.

But no matter how strongly they might protest against the morals of Vergil, nothing could eradicate from their minds the poetry they had learned in childhood. Perhaps this poet enjoyed some degree of immunity from their attacks because of the traditional connection of his name with Christianity. However that may be, he was a general favorite for quotation. The earliest evidence of knowledge of Vergil in Britain is in the book of Bishop Gildas, in which he quotes from the *Aeneid* [11] in the midst of his lamentations over the downfall of his country. The *History of the Britons*, also, which goes under the name of Nennius, cites a line from the third book of the *Georgics*,[12] and in the curious genealogies of Brutus, gives evidence of some knowledge of the adventures of Aeneas.

There is no room to doubt that Aldhelm was familiar with all the works of Vergil. While some of his classical quotations may be due to the careful study of the illustrations in a mediaeval grammar, this is probably not the case with Vergil. In his *Liber de Septenario, et de Metris, Aenigmatibus, ac Pedum Regulis*, the illustrative quotations from the *Aeneid*, *Georgics* and *Eclogues* are nearly as numerous as those from all other Latin poetry put together. He shows familiarity, not only with single lines, but with long passages, such as the description of Fama, which he quotes in one of his *Riddles* and imitates to some extent in his picture of Superbia, and the account of Allecto, which he also follows, even more closely, in a passage in the poetical version of the *De Laudibus Virginitatis*.[13] Beside these longer passages, this poem is full of Vergilian reminiscences. The opening words, *omnipotens genitor*, strike the note at

[11] *Aen.* 9. 24. [12] *Georg.* 3. 25.

[13] *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, ll. 1635 ff.

once, and a mere glance down the pages at the ends of the lines will reveal a large number of verse-tags which show that the writer's chief acquaintance with the hexameter has been in the poems of Vergil. Such, for example, are the following: *caelestibus armis, fama super aethera notus* (applied to Gregorius), *quo non praestantior alter, stipante caterva, limina portae, cornua cantu,* and many others. Phrases too within the lines sometimes give a brief passage almost the appearance of a Vergilian cento. That he knows also some of the literary legends which had gathered about the biography of Vergil, is evident from his reference in his treatise on meters to the story about Vergil's writing his own epitaph.

The Venerable Bede was not so devoted to Vergil as his predecessor. The quotations are not so numerous, the echoes in his poetry are fewer, and in the illustrative quotations in his technical works there is not such a preponderance of lines from Vergil. He rather prides himself on his unlikeness to the Mantuan in his choice of subject-matter, saying in the hymn celebrating Queen Ethelrida, a holy virgin,

> Bella Maro resonet, nos pacis dona canamus;
> Munera nos Christi, bella Maro resonet.[14]

Yet in the midst of his narrative in the *Ecclesiastical History,* he can write, "Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant, quem res exitum haberet solliciti expectantes." And echoes in his poetry, though comparatively few, are to be found. The lines describing a gust of wind striking a ship in the *De Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti,* go back to the *Aeneid* for a model as so many storm pictures have done since the days of Vergil. Phrases too like *inque dies, haec ubi dicta, instaurat honorem, nec me sententia fallit,* some of which had become commonplaces in narrative poetry, mark

[14] *Eccl. Hist.* Bk. IV. Chap. 20.

the Vergilian influence. The *Cuculus sive Veris et Hiemis Conflictus*, variously assigned to Bede and Alcuin, is an eclogue in amoebean form, with several reminiscences of the master's phraseology, such as Palaemon's *desine plura*, which closes the contest. The most significant thing, however, is that without exception, all of the quotations in the *De Temporum Ratione* are from Vergil, and that all of them are given without his name, several of them beginning with such words as *et Poeta describens, de qua Poeta, meminit horum et Poeta.* For the Middle Ages Vergil was truly the Poeta *par excellence.*[15]

To Bede the fall of Troy and the wanderings of Aeneas were historical facts. They found a place, together with actual events, in his chronicle of the Third Age of the World in the *De Temporibus* and the *De Temporum Ratione.* But to Alcuin, Vergil was the *falsus Maro*, and he did not wish his pupils to have anything to do with the *Vergilii mendacia.* Alcuin was an excellent example of the mediaeval ecclesiastical attitude toward Vergil, for he who said,

Auribus ille tuis male frivola falsa sonabit,[16]

had in his youth been *Virgilii amplius quam psalmorum amator*,[17] and what he had learned in those days of early devotion remained an integral part of his intellectual equipment. He made frequent use of this despised and beloved *falsator* to point a moral in his prose works, and neither Bede nor Aldhelm can equal him in the number of Vergilian imitations and echoes in his poetry.[18] In his technical treatises too the quotations from Vergil outnumber those

[15] Cf. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, VII. 6.

[16] *Carmen*, prefixed to *Compendium in Canticum Canticorum.*

[17] Anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, Chap. 1.

[18] For a copious list of Vergilian quotations, allusions, and echoes in the works of Alcuin, see Omera Floyd Long, *The Attitude of Alcuin toward Vergil*, in *Studies in Honor of B. L. Gildersleeve.*

from all other authors put together by a ratio of more than four to one. And his excuse is the familiar appeal to the authority of the apostle Paul, who "aurum sapientiae, in stercore poetarum inventum, in divitias ecclesiasticae transtulit prudentiae; sicut omnes sancti doctores, eius exemplo eruditi, fecerunt." [19]

The search for Vergilian influence in the vernacular literature of the Anglo-Saxons is attended with little success. Alfred shows the characteristic mediaeval ignorance or neglect of chronology when he says, "Peah Omerus se goda sceop, þe mid Crecu selest was: se was Firgilies lareow; se Firgilius waes mid Laedenwarum selest," [20] and again in verse speaks of Homer as "Firgilies freond and lareow." The poems assigned to Caedmon and Cynewulf naturally depend on the Biblical narrative for their story and structure. The briefer secular poetry, such as *Widsith*, *Deor*, *Maldon* and *Brunanburgh*, show no traces of Vergilian style, subject-matter or treatment, except in so far as the last two give evidence of the truth of the following statement by W. P. Ker: "There are certain commonplaces of actual life which reappear in the heroic literature of different countries and make a kind of prosaic stuff for the poetic imagination to work upon. Epic requires a particular kind of warfare, not too highly organized, and the manner of the Homeric battle is found again in Germany, Ireland, and old France." [21]

The theory of Vergilian influence on *Beowulf*, however, has been seriously advanced by excellent scholars, and calls for some discussion. The most complete statement of the case is that by Prof. Fr. Klaeber, of the University of Minnesota.[22] After a general discussion of the matter, he pro-

[19] *Epistle* 147.

[20] *Boethius*, Cap. XLI.

[21] W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 81.

[22] *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, Band 126, pp. 40–48, 339–359.

ceeds to set forth the parallels in such things as the existence of accounts of battles, of voyages over the sea, and of life at court, and in the ideas of Fate and of Heaven and Hell. He finds definite similarities in the first part of *Beowulf*, in the account of the hero's arrival and entertainment at the court of Hrothgar, and the landing of Aeneas on the shore of Africa and his treatment at Carthage. Others have also pointed out here a similarity to the reception of Ulysses by the Phaeacians. In his second article, Prof. Klaeber lists in great detail similarities in character-drawing, in situation, in the expression of certain thoughts and feelings, and in certain incidents in the narrative, and finally resemblances in phraseology and Latinisms in construction.

Such parallels are always interesting, but as proof of direct influence they are not always convincing. Prof. Klaeber himself is rather cautious, saying that many of the discoveries may rest upon accident, but that some seem to furnish incontestable proof and to lead to the conclusion that the influence of the *Aeneid* upon Old English literature is greater than anyone has dared heretofore to suppose. If there were positive proof otherwise that the *Beowulf* poet knew Vergil and was copying him, these parallels would furnish excellent corroborative and illustrative evidence. But there is no such positive proof, and the mere fact that two poets, both writing epics, chose to represent a remarkable hero, who, after a sea voyage, was welcomed with hospitality by those on whose shores he landed, and entertained with a feast, does not demonstrate conclusively that the later poet was using the earlier as a model. Nor is the point settled by observing that Beowulf and Aeneas both stand in awe of their God, that Hrothgar and Evander bewailed the loss of their youth or indulged in reminiscences of former days (are they not merely furnishing two examples of the universal truth of Horace's descriptive

phrase, *laudator temporis acti?*), that the halls of Hrothgar and Dido were adorned for the feast ("ein merkwürdiger Parallele"!), that the warriors in both poems thought that they might never see their homes again, that the heroes resolved to conquer or die, that Grendel and Polyphemus were both horrid monsters, that an old man lamented over his loneliness after the death of his son, and Dido bewailed her loneliness for Aeneas, or that the many other parallels adduced, of which those mentioned are a fair sample, can be drawn. Of the similarities in phraseology, Prof. Klaeber himself admits that it is difficult to speak with certainty.

It is of course perfectly possible that the *Beowulf* poet knew Vergil, for we have already seen that writers from the time of Gildas to that of Alcuin gave positive evidence of an acquaintance with his works. But there seems to me to be nothing in all these illustrations to make it certain that he was following Vergil, either consciously or unconsciously. The closest parallels are, as Prof. Klaeber says, those in the first part of *Beowulf*, from the arrival of the hero to the slaying of Grendel. Closest of all, perhaps, is that between the song of the bard at Hrothgar's court, of

> how the Almighty made the earth,
> fairest fields enfolded by water,
> set, triumphant, sun and moon
> for a light to lighten the land-dwellers,[22]

with the song of Iopas,

> hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores,
> unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes,
> Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas geminosque Triones.
> (*Aen.* 1. 742–4)

[22] *Beowulf*, ll. 92–95. Gummere's translation in *The Oldest English Epic.*

But from this as from the other parallels, no more definite conclusion can be drawn than that expressed by Prof. Brandl, that these parallels cannot be used as proof of a direct dependence of *Beowulf* on Vergil, as they may all be explained on some different ground. They do, however, he thinks, point out the relationship between the composition of *Beowulf* and that of the Roman artificial epic, indicating that the methods are the same in each case.[24]

The barren centuries which followed the death of Alfred gave little evidence of the influence of Vergil, except in the case of such Latin poetry as continued to be written. The writers of Saints' Lives, which was the chief form of literature of that time, set themselves definitely in opposition to all classical learning. Aelfric tells us, for example, that when they were converted St. Eugenia and St. Basil utterly abandoned the learning and literature of the Greeks and Romans. Some writers even gloried in their ignorance of the ancient authors. But with the revival of learning of the twelfth century came a renewed interest in Latin, and the writers of the period became the chief exemplars and defenders of a classical education.

The most learned man of the twelfth century was undoubtedly John of Salisbury, whose *Policraticus* and *Metalogicus* give ample evidence of his wide reading and his advocacy of the study of classical literature. In this reading, Vergil was of course included. As the recent editor of his *Policraticus* says in his Prolegomena, "Vergilii Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneida passim citat. Servii et Bernardi Silvestris commentariis usus est et Vita Vergilii quae sub Donati nomine circumfertur." [25] There are about a hundred refer-

[24] Paul's *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie*, Vol. II, p. 1008. For a refutation of this theory, see H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, pp. 74–76.

[25] Clemens C. I. Webb, *Policraticus*, Prol.

ences to and quotations from the works of Vergil, cited in illustration of all kinds of topics, hunting, incantations, omens, dreams, the use of flattery, the qualities proper to princes and magistrates, the glory to be obtained from the praise of great writers. Vergil is by no means his favorite author, however. Ovid, Horace, Cicero, and St. Augustine are quoted far more frequently, and Valerius Maximus, Macrobius, Lucan, and Juvenal are quite as popular as the Mantuan.

The chief interest in John of Salisbury's treatment of Vergil lies, not in these quotations and references, for these are not marked by any individuality, but in his allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid*. "Procedat tibi poeta Mantuanus," he says, "qui sub imagine fabularum totius philosophiae exprimit veritatem." [26] And in his last two chapters [27] he gives a definite illustration of what he means in this sentence. Following in general the example of Fulgentius, he interprets the first six books of the *Aeneid* as representing the six ages of man. The name Eneas, he says, means merely the inhabitant of the body, "*ennos* enim, ut Grecis placet, habitator est, *demas* corpus et ab his componitur Eneas ut significet animam quasi carnis tugurio habitantem." This symbolic figure, then, passes through six stages in his career, each described in the story of one of the books of the *Aeneid*. The first book represents infancy attacked by storms, the second, youth, the third, young manhood, the fourth, the experience of illicit love restrained by reason in the person of Mercury, the fifth, maturity, the sixth, old age. "Constat enim," he concludes, "apud eos qui mentem diligentius perscrutantur auctorum Maronem geminae doctrinae vires declarasse, dum vanitate figmenti poetici philosophicae virtutis involvit archana." In the next chapter he applies Vergil's description of the golden bough

[26] Bk. VI. chap. 22. [27] Bk. VIII. chaps. 24, 25.

to the attempt of man to wrest from the tree of wisdom the branch of virtue. "Neque enim ad genitorem vitae, Deum scilicet, alter redit, nisi qui virtutis ramum excisum de ligno scientiae praetendit." But no one can tear off this branch without knowing the whole tree. "Hoc ipsum sensit et Maro, qui, licet veritatis esset ignarus et in tenebris gentium ambularet, ad Eliseos campos felicium et cari genitoris conspectus Eneam admittendum esse non credidit, nisi docente Sibilla, . . . ramum hunc . . . consecraret." Here is the interesting contrast with Alcuin. The later Christian feels that some use may be made of the stories which charmed and shocked the earlier ecclesiastic. He believes "nec verba nec sensus . . . gentilium fugiendos, dummodo vitentur errores." This reconcilement of pleasure and duty had an abiding charm which lasted long after the religious prejudice which gave it birth was a thing of the past.

The same allegorizing tendency determines much of the treatment of the material in Alexander Neckam's *De Naturis Rerum*, with its frequent alternation of "Narratio" and "Adaptatio." He explains that when Vergil says that Aeneas had as a friend the *fidus Achates*, he means merely that he carried with him an agate (*achates*), a stone which had the power of rendering the bearer *amabilem et facundum et potentem*.[28] In his chapter on bees, which is largely compiled from the fourth *Georgic*,[29] and contains a long quotation from it, he applies everything to human life and draws a moral from the activities and characteristics of the bees.

Neckam has also come under the spell of the mediaeval legends in regard to Vergil, both literary and popular. He tells the story of the saving of Vergil's life by a gnat, which, according to the current tale, was the occasion of the writing of the *Culex*. But when he compared the poem with the

[28] Bk. II. chap. 85. [29] Bk. II. chap. 163.

story, he found that the circumstances were different.[30] He also gives an account of some of the marvels attributed to Vergil, whose name was so closely associated with Naples, one of the places "in quibus artes floruerunt liberales."[31] This is the first literary expression of these popular stories about Vergil's miraculous power. They seem to have been recorded first by men like Gervase of Tilbury [32] and Conrad of Querfurt, who brought them back from Italy, and it is possible that Neckam had heard them himself in Naples. He relates five of the wonders which had been ascribed to Vergil, one of which, the *Salvatio Romae*, had a wide vogue, and recurs several times in the literature of England.

As Neckam tells it, the story runs as follows: Vergil built at Rome a noble palace, in which were images representing all the nations of the world. There was also a bronze horseman, who, when any nation threatened to attack Rome, turned in the direction of the image of that country, and so warned the city of its danger. When Vergil was asked how long the palace would stand, he replied, "Until a virgin shall bear a child," and at the birth of Christ, the building suddenly fell to the ground. The same tale is told in Neckam's poem, *De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae*, but with no mention of Vergil. The story is found in many forms, and connected with other names, such as that of Romulus. There are oriental analogues in stories of cities protected from the approach of strangers by a bronze duck,

[30] Bk. II. chap. 109. [31] Bk. II. chap. 174.

[32] See his *Otia Imperialia*, III. 10, 12, 13, 15, 16. He here tells the stories of the bronze fly, of the shambles, of the imprisonment of all the snakes in Naples under the Dominican gate, of the two marble heads on the gate, a smiling one on the right and a frowning one on the left, which determined the fortunes of all who entered, of Vergil's marvelous garden, of the statue with the trumpet, which warded off the winds from Vesuvius, of the healing baths at Puteoli, and of the cave where no plots could be made.

which has suggested that the classical story of the Capitoline geese may be the basis of the whole legend. According to another popular version of the story, the *Salvatio Romae* was a mirror, set up near the city, in which all events happening in the world could be seen, and so any threatened danger could be averted. This forms one of the stories in the Middle English versions of the *Seven Sages of Rome*, usually associated with the name of Vergil, once with that of Merlin. It is this version that is told at length by Gower, and referred to by Chaucer in the *Squieres Tale*. According to Gower,[33] whose tale really belongs in spirit with that of Neckam, rather than two hundred years later, Vergil made a mirror "of his clergie," which should reflect any enemies who were about to make an attack on Rome. He

> sette it in the tounes yë
> Of marbre on a piler withoute. . . .
> So that whil thilke Mirour laste,
> Ther was no lond which mihte achieve
> With werre Rome for to grieve;
> Whereof was gret envie tho.

At a certain time, Rome, whose emperor was named Crassus, was at war with Carthage under Hannibal and with "Puile." Her enemies were prevented from doing any harm to the city by the virtues of the mirror, so when three philosophers offered to destroy it, they accepted the proposition with alacrity. These three men went to Rome with a large amount of treasure which they secretly buried in two different places. Then they appeared before Crassus, and told him that they were able by the help of spirits which visited them in their dreams, to discover where gold was hidden. They offered to enrich the emperor, and he, being very covetous, accepted their offer. On successive days, they dug up the two hoards that they had buried, pretending that

[33] *Conf. Amantis*, V. 2.

the location had been revealed to them in the night. On the third day they announced that there was treasure "under the glas," and asked permission to dig there. Crassus demurred at this, fearing that harm might come to the mirror, but when the philosophers promised that they would so prop up the tower that there would be no possible danger, he consented. The three philosophers, therefore, undermined the tower, first putting props under it as they had promised. But at night they set fire to the props and fled; the tower fell and the mirror was destroyed. The result was a general attack against Rome, and Hannibal slew so many noble Romans in one day that he got three bushels of gold rings from their fingers, and bridged the Tiber with their dead bodies. The Romans, in punishment of the "coveitise" of the emperor, which had caused all the mischief, poured molten gold down his throat. While Gower seems to be responsible for the addition of Carthage and Hannibal, the main outlines of the story are those which occur in the other accounts. Spenser assigns the manufacture of a similar mirror to Merlin, and says he made it for King Ryence of Deheubarth. Just how the mirror survived the fall of the tower, I do not know, but John Evelyn tells us that in 1643 he visited the cathedral of St. Denis near Paris, and that in the treasury, which was "esteemed one of the richest in Europe, . . . lay in a window a mirror of a kind of stone said to have belonged to the poet Virgil." It is interesting that this is the version of the legend which has survived in the witch-lore of Italy to the present day.[34]

Neckam also tells the story of the golden leech, which Vergil made and put into a well in order to check the spread

[34] See Leland, *Unpublished Legends of Virgil*, pp. 6, 7. For a complete account of the variants of this popular story, see Clouston, *The Magical Elements in Chaucer's Squire's Tale.*

of a plague of leeches in Naples. Many years afterwards, when the well was cleaned and the golden leech removed, the plague returned, and could not be stayed until the talisman was found and restored to the well. It is to the similar story of the bronze fly which kept all other flies from the city, that Walter Map refers in the *Apocalypsis Goliae*,

> Lucanum video ducem bellantium;
> Formantem aereas muscas Virgilium,

which, by a rather natural confusion with the subject of the fourth *Georgic*, was translated about 1600,

> And Virgil then did shape the small bees of the aire.

This great magician also laid a spell on a shambles in Naples, so that meat placed in it would keep fresh indefinitely, much to the joy of the butchers, who had been troubled by the unnaturally rapid spoiling of their meat. Around his own garden Vergil had instead of a wall an impenetrable atmosphere, and for his own use he had a bridge of air on which he could travel to any quarter of the globe.

The Latin chroniclers of the twelfth century also show a familiarity with the works of Vergil, for they quote him frequently. And William of Malmesbury tells of the finding of the body of Pallas, whom Turnus killed, uncorrupted after so many years, with an epitaph over it. The same marvelous story appears in the English *Gesta Romanorum*, as a symbol of the immortality of the soul.[35]

The chief interest of the chroniclers in Aeneas was in his relationship to Brutus, the eponymous founder of the race of the Britons. The whole of western Europe felt a sympathy for the Trojans on account of their supposed de-

[35] William of Malmesbury, *Hist. of the Kings of England*, Bk. II, par. 206. *Gest. Rom.*, translated from the Latin by Charles Swan, Tale CLVIII. For other stories in the *Gest. Rom.* connected with the name of Vergil, see Tales LVII, CVII, CLXXVI.

scent from some individual of the race, and England was no exception. It was a common thing for histories of England to begin with the story of Aeneas and the coming of Brute to Albion, and for Layamon it was natural to call his poem the *Brut*, perhaps in imitation of the *Aeneid*, for Brute stood in the same relation to the British as Aeneas did to the Romans. Geoffrey of Monmouth was the first to tell the story after the confused account of Nennius, and he did it most fully. "After the Trojan War, Aeneas, fleeing from the desolation of the city, came with Ascanius by ship unto Italy. There, for that Aeneas was worshipfully received by King Latinus, Turnus, King of the Rutulians, did wax envious and made war against him. When they met in battle, Aeneas had the upper hand, and after that Turnus was slain, obtained the kingdom of Italy and Lavinia the daughter of Latinus." There follows the story of Brute, the great-grandson of Aeneas. It was prophesied before his birth that he should slay both his father and his mother. His mother died at his birth, and later, when hunting, he accidentally shot and killed his father. In consequence he was banished, and fled to Greece. There he found the descendants of Helenus in bondage to the Greek king. He finally freed them and sailed away with them from Greece. His voyage was attended with many adventures, more or less reminiscent of the *Aeneid*, and he finally arrived at the island of Albion, of which he took possession and which he renamed Britain and at his death handed on to his son, Locrine.[36] It was this tradition of the founder of the race which Milton had in mind when he wrote,

> Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
> Sprung of old Anchises' line.[37]

[36] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, Bk. I. chaps. 3 ff. (Everyman's Library.)

[37] *Comus*, ll. 922, 923.

The chroniclers bring to a close the mediaeval period in Vergilian influence. For while the traditions of the Middle Ages were perpetuated in the succeeding centuries, with Chaucer comes the dawn of a new day in the knowledge and understanding of the classics, a slight preliminary gleam of the later Renaissance.

CHAPTER III

CHAUCER, HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND HIS IMITATORS

In his knowledge of Vergil and his treatment of Vergilian material, as in other things, Chaucer stood out from among the men of his century and even of the next. While his friend and contemporary Gower was telling at length the whole story of Vergil's magic mirror, Chaucer was merely referring to it in the *Squieres Tale* in a manner which might indicate that he discredited the legend. While the Gawain poet was still associating Aeneas with the plot that caused the downfall of Troy, Chaucer was writing of the voyages of the Trojan and his adventures in Carthage, with a little prejudice and lack of proportion, it is true, but still with "Virgil Mantuan" and "Naso" as his "auctours." Not that Chaucer was untouched by the mediaeval tradition, for we shall see presently that the romanticizing tendency was a powerful factor in determining his treatment of the character and story of Aeneas. But he was writing with the *Aeneid* before him.

Chaucer probably was familiar with the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, although there is no conclusive evidence that he knew anything that Vergil wrote except the *Aeneid*. The motto on the Prioress' "broche of gold," *Amor vincit omnia*, was probably a commonplace in Chaucer's time. The apparent quotations of the famous *latet anguis in herba* in the *Somnours Tale* and the *Squieres Tale*, might easily have come at second hand from the *Roman de la Rose*. Other possible allusions to any other work of Vergil except the *Aeneid*, may be similarly explained without the necessity of

assuming on Chaucer's part any knowledge of the *Eclogues* or the *Georgics*.[1] Such an assumption, however, would be the simplest way to explain these references. To Gower was sent a poem by a certain philosopher, perhaps Strode, beginning, "Eneidos Bucolicisque Georgica metra perhennis," and if Strode and Gower knew the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, why not Chaucer?

Prof. Kittredge says that it was probably in the period from 1373 to 1380 that Chaucer extended his Latin reading to include Vergil, "certainly in the decade following the writing of the *Book of the Duchess* in 1369."[2] This is true in spite of the fact that there are two allusions to the story of the *Aeneid* in the last mentioned poem. Lavinia, whose story was one of those pictured on the windows of the chamber in Chaucer's dream, might easily have become one of the stock figures in the love-vision type of poetry, in view of the prominent part she played in such a romance as the *Eneas*. She is mentioned again in the Balade in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*. The reference to

> Dydo, quene eek of Cartage,
> That slow hir-self, for Eneas
> Was fals,

undoubtedly may be explained as due to a knowledge of the *Heroides*, occurring as it does with allusions to other heroines celebrated by Ovid. The mention of Antenor,

> The traytour that betraysed Troye,

whereas in the later poems it is always Sinon who is linked with Ganelon as a type of the arch-traitor, shows that at this time Chaucer was indebted to Dares or his imitators

[1] Cf. *T. & C.* IV. 790 and *Georg.* 1. 38 and 4. 453–527. But we know that he was familiar with the story of Orpheus in Ovid, *Met.* 10. 1–85.

[2] *Chaucer and his Poetry*, p. 28.

for the Troy story rather than to Vergil. We may assume then, that Chaucer's acquaintance with Vergil did not necessarily begin until after 1369, that he knew him well before writing the *Hous of Fame*, and that, as will be shown later, his knowledge grew more complete and accurate before he incorporated the story of Dido in his *Legend of Good Women*.

There are a number of references to the *Aeneid* scattered through the *Canterbury Tales*. It is interesting to note that in spite of the hold that the Dido episode had evidently taken on Chaucer's imagination, the only mention of her name outside of the two poems where her story is told at length, except for the passages where it occurs in the lists of stock heroines of romance, is in the Introduction to the *Tale of the Man of Lawe*, in the enumeration of the stories in Chaucer's own "Seintes Legende of Cupyde." The onslaught of Pyrrhus, the fall of Ilion, and the pathetic death of Priam are mentioned twice; the treachery of Sinon is cited as the parallel of the "sly iniquitee" of the col-fox,

> O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
> False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
> That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!

and the horse of brass in the *Squieres Tale* is twice compared with the "Grekes hors Synon." Turnus is twice alluded to, and the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is evidently in Chaucer's mind when he causes the Fiend to promise the Somnour full knowledge of the happenings in the other world,

> For thou shalt by thyn owene experience
> Conne in a chayer rede of this sentence
> Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,
> Or Dant also.[3]

[3] See *C. T.*, B 289, 4548, 4418, F 209, 305–8, A 1945, B 197 ff., D 1519.

While allusions to Vergil are plentiful, mere reminiscences, such as we find in abundance in later poets, are rare indeed. Prof. Skeat ingeniously explains the line in the *Legend of Phyllis*, with its introduction of a new water deity,

> And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they alle,

as a confused recollection of the Vergilian passage,

> et senior Glauci *chorus* Inousque Palaemon
> *Tritonesque* citi Phorcique *exercitus omnis;*
> laeva tenent *Thetis* et Melite Panopeaque virgo.[4]

And in *Troilus and Criseyde* we find such Vergilian expressions as "a thousand shippes," and the lover's cry, "Goddess or woman."

The first book of the *Hous of Fame* is almost entirely devoted to a summary of the *Aeneid*. As has been shown conclusively by Prof. Sypherd, the poem belongs to the love-vision type.[5] It begins in the usual fashion with a discussion of dreams. This is followed by an invocation to the "god of slepe," after which comes the description of the dream itself. Chaucer fell asleep on the night of the tenth of December, and dreamed that he was in a temple of glass, which, by means of the representations of Venus, Cupid and Vulcan, he soon discovered to be dedicated to the Goddess of Love. On the walls of this temple were pictures illustrating the story of the *Aeneid*, with the emphasis strongly on the episode of Dido and Aeneas. "The suggestion of the temple of Love came from the love-visions," says Prof. Sypherd; "the story of Dido and Aeneas came probably from his favorite author, Vergil, but was enlarged by Chaucer himself in a manner consonant with the nature of a love-poem."[6] But the source of the story, both here

[4] *Leg. of Good Women*, VIII. 2422, *Aen.* 5. 823–5.

[5] *Studies in Chaucer's Hous of Fame.* [6] *Op. cit.* p. 19.

and in the *Legend*, is undoubtedly the *Aeneid*, although a few suggestions may be traced to Ovid, and some of the atmosphere and emphasis is due to the romances, perhaps to the *Eneas* itself. Had we any doubts about the source, the inscription on the wall of this temple must set them at rest. In these lines, a close translation of the first few lines of the *Aeneid*, may be felt at once the difference in tone between the stately Roman poet and his fourteenth century admirer.

> I wol now singe, if that I can,
> The armes, and al-so the man,
> That first cam, through his destinee,
> Fugitif of Troye contree,
> In Itaile, with ful moche pyne,
> Unto the strondes of Lavyne.

The idea of the paintings on the walls has been traced to many sources, more or less probable. If Chaucer had any mediaeval account in mind, it was probably a passage in Boccaccio's *Amorosa Visione*, where the walls were painted with legendary love-episodes, among them that of Dido and Aeneas. But the suggestion may have come directly from the *Aeneid* itself.[7] And the idea of wall-paintings was probably not foreign to Chaucer's personal experience, for there were many such to be seen, and the picturing of mythological subjects on tapestries was common enough.

For the sake of facilitating the discussion of the two treatments of the Vergilian material in the *Hous of Fame* and the *Legend of Dido*, the following table has been prepared, indicating the proportions of the two Chaucerian versions, and their relation to each other and to the *Aeneid*.

[7] *Aen.* 1. 446–493, 6. 20–33.

AENEID	HOUS OF FAME BK. I	LEGEND OF DIDO
Bk. II, ll. 13–558.	151–161, Destruction of Troy.	930–939.
Bk. II, ll. 588–804.	162–197, Flight of Aeneas and loss of Creusa.	940–952.
Bk. III. Bk. I, ll. 34–123, 124–156, Stilling of storm by *Neptune*.	198–221, Adventures on the sea; the storm; the stilling of the tempest by *Jupiter*.	953–962, "But of his aventures in the see Nis nat to purpos for to speke of here."
Bk. I, ll. 157–222, 305–410.	222–238, Landing in Africa; meeting of Aeneas and Venus.	963–1003.
Bk. I, ll. 411–756.	239–268, Meeting and betrothal of Aeneas and Dido.	1004–1253, Dido and Aeneas meet in Juno's temple; description of her; the pictures in the temple; arrival of Ilioneus; appearance of Aeneas; Dido's reception of him; the feast; the gifts; arrival of
Bks. II–III. Bk. IV, ll. 1–218.	Aeneas tells his story.	Ascanius; Aeneas tells his story; Dido's love; her conversation with Anna; the hunt;
	Cf. ll. 349–351, and Bk. III, ll. 1368–1392.	the storm; the betrothal; Fame carries the news to Iarbas.
	(269–292, Lamentation on the unfaithfulness of man.)	(1254–1284.)

AENEID	HOUS OF FAME BK. I	LEGEND OF DIDO
Bk. IV, ll. 279–295, 296–392, Dido remonstrates with Aeneas *passionately:* "Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide," etc. 504–521.	293–363, Aeneas plans to depart; lament of Dido *to herself.*	1285–1324, Aeneas plans to depart; Dido remonstrates with him *gently and lovingly:* "My dere herte, which that I love most." She sacrifices.
Bk. IV, ll. 553–583, 584–705.	364–378, Departure of Aeneas; death of Dido. (Appeal to authority of "Virgile in Eneidos.")	1325–1351, Departure of Aeneas; lament and death of Dido.
(Ovid, *Heroides* VII.)	(379–382, Dido's letter to Aeneas.) (383–426, Exempla to illustrate the unfaithfulness of man.)	(1352–1367, Dido's letter to Aeneas.)
Bk. IV, ll. 265–278, 553–570.	427–432, Mercury's message; the excuse of Aeneas.	
Bk. V, ll. 1–11, 833–871.	433–438, Aeneas' voyage to Italy, and loss of his steersman.	
Bk. V. Funeral games for Anchises in Sicily.		
Bk. VI.	439–450, Aeneas' visit to the Underworld.	
Bks. VII–XII.	451–467, Arrival in Italy; treaty with Latinus; battles; death of Turnus; marriage with Lavinia; final triumph of Aeneas, "maugre Juno."	Cf. l. 1331.

A study of this table reveals at once one of the most interesting things in the handling of the story in the *Hous of Fame*, the proportion of the narrative. In this connection the *Legend* must be left out of consideration, for that is frankly concerned only with the Dido episode, and therefore Chaucer says truly,

> But of his aventures in the see
> Nis nat to purpos for to speke of here,
> For hit accordeth nat to my matere.
> But, as I seide, of him and of Dido
> Shal be my tale, til that I have do.

The pictures on the walls of the temple of Venus, however, are supposed to represent the whole story of the *Aeneid*. Book II of the Latin poem is summarized in forty-seven lines; Book III and about a hundred and fifty lines of Book I, in twenty-four. The remainder of Book I, which narrated the arrival of Aeneas in Africa and his reception at the court of Dido, occupies, in Chaucer's account, forty-seven lines. The events of Book IV occupy ninety-two lines of the *Hous of Fame*, but of these, sixty are devoted to the lament of Dido when she learns that Aeneas is about to depart. The fifth book of the *Aeneid* is allotted only six lines in all; the sixth fares somewhat better with twelve; and the last six books are disposed of in seventeen! Thus the emphasis rests heavily on the Carthaginian episode, a mere episode in the Latin poem, but the main portion of the story in the English version. But it must be remembered that this is a love-vision, and that the *Aeneid*, therefore, has become, as Prof. Kittredge says, the epic, not of Rome, but of Venus.[8] The elaboration of the sentimental part of the story, especially the long account of Dido's "compleynt," is in full harmony with the mediaeval romantic

[8] *Chaucer and his Poetry*, p. 78.

tendency shown previously in the *Eneas*, and subsequently in the *Eneydos* of Caxton. The poem was intended to be read by those interested in stories of courtly love, and therefore must conform as much as possible to the romantic convention. The whole attitude of Chaucer toward the subject is indicated in the lines with which he closes the narrative of the adventures of the son of the Goddess of Love:

> How, maugre Juno, Eneas
> For al hir sleighte and hir compas,
> Acheved al his aventure;
> For Jupiter took of him cure
> At the preyere of Venus,
> The whiche I preye alway save us,
> And us ay of our sorwes lighte!

The omissions in and additions to the narrative are also characteristically romantic. Who in a courtly audience would have been interested in the funeral games of Anchises? Chaucer omits them entirely, without even a word of mention. Had he been willing to turn them into a tournament, with knights in action and fair ladies looking on, doubtless he would have won applause. But boxing and wrestling might well be thought to have no place in a love-poem. This is the only important portion of the *Aeneid* which is omitted entirely, although necessarily in the abridged form in which the story here appears, many of the individual incidents are passed over in silence, both in the *Hous of Fame* and in the *Legend*. It is interesting to see that the omission in the earlier poem of the details in the meeting of Aeneas and Dido and the events which followed his recital of his adventures, is not paralleled in the later one, where they are given elaborately and accurately.

Although Chaucer does omit these details in the *Hous of Fame*, in the same poem he cannot refrain from reporting

in true mediaeval fashion the "compleynt" of Dido on finding herself forsaken. This is given largely on his own authority, as he himself says, —

Non other auctor alegge I —

although he does take some hints from Vergil, especially in the lines,

"O, that your love, ne your bonde,
That ye han sworn with your right honde,
Ne my cruel deeth," quod she,
"May holde yow still heer with me!"

which are an almost literal translation of the verses,

nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam
nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?
(*Aen.* 4. 307–8)

A still more characteristically mediaeval addition, which has its counterpart also in the *Legend*, is the long dissertation, with two proverbs as text and commentary, on the untrustworthiness and falseness of man, reinforced as it is later in the poem by a series of exempla, the stories of such deceived and deserted women as Oenone, Medea, Deianira, and "Adriane."

Changes in the spelling of proper names, such as that of the last heroine mentioned above, are common. In the *Hous of Fame*, the Italian bride of Aeneas is called Lavyna, and in the *Legend*, Dido's first husband is named Sitheo. An actual mistake is found in the *Hous of Fame*, in the separation of Ascanius and Iulus into two different persons:

And hir yonge sone Iulo
And eek Ascanius also.

The explanation is not difficult.[9] Such a misinterpretation is not remarkable in the Middle Ages. "Ilioun" is not

[9] See Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, Vol. II. p. 386.

thought of as the same as Troy, but is regarded as the citadel, the "castel" of the town. An example of the reverse process, whereby two persons are welded into one, is to be found in the "Brutus Cassius," who, according to Chaucer's Monk, "maad conspiracye" against Julius Caesar. Another slight error, or perhaps we might call it a picturesque addition on Chaucer's part, occurs in the same passage. He says that Creusa was lost "in a forest," but there is nothing in the *avia* of the Latin to necessitate such an interpretation.

Three other mistakes in this same poem indicate that Chaucer was not yet thoroughly at home with his original. In relating the events connected with the stilling of the storm off the coast of Carthage, he confuses the order of the incidents. He says that there was a picture representing Venus imploring Jupiter to save Aeneas' fleet, and that he saw

> Joves Venus kisse
> And graunted of the tempest lisse.

But in Vergil, the quieting of the storm is due to Neptune, and after her son has landed on the African shore, Venus, motivated by her fear for his safety in Carthage, appeals to Jupiter for his aid. Again, when Aeneas and Achates met Venus in the forest in disguise, Chaucer tells us that

> Eneas gan him pleyne,
> Whan that he knew her, of his peyne,

but as Vergil tells the story, Aeneas did not recognize his mother until after his conversation with her, when *vera incessu patuit dea.* By omitting entirely the funeral games of Anchises, Chaucer naturally brings together the storm at the beginning of the fifth *Aeneid* and the loss of Palinurus at the end.

The *Legend of Dido* shows a marked improvement in the matter of accuracy in following the original. None of

the mistakes in the *Hous of Fame* is repeated here. Indeed the only error which may be regarded as a real misunderstanding of the Latin, is the misreading of *leti* as *laetitiae* in

> this was the firste morwe
> Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorwe.

There is in these two poems a radical change from the Vergilian conception of the characters of Aeneas and Dido. The former is no longer the Fate-driven hero, the destined founder of the mighty Roman race, obeying the commands of the gods rather than his own inclinations (*Italiam non sponte sequor*), but the "fals lover," the "traitour;" nor is Dido the passionate woman, swept by the force of her emotions into disregard of her solemn oaths of loyalty to her first husband, but one of the faithful, much-abused "saints of Cupid." The vision of his father and the visit of Mercury to Aeneas with the commands of Jove, are mere excuses on the lips of the faithless lover, and

> Ther-with his false teres out they sterte;

for although this is what "the book seyth" in order "to excusen Eneas," the real reason for his departure is that

> This Eneas, that hath so depe y-swore,
> Is wery of his craft within a throwe;
> The hete ernest is al over-blowe.

The new conception is most marked in the *Legend*, where the narrative, however, follows more faithfully and accurately the Latin original, and is far more detailed. This new Dido is a typical heroine of romance, a "fresshe lady,"

> So yong, so lusty, with her eyen glade,
> That if that god that heven and erthe made,
> Wolde han a love, for beaute and goodnesse,
> And womanhod, and trouthe, and seemlinesse,
> Whom should he loven but this lady swete?

She is also

> holde of alle quenes flour,
> Of gentilesse, of freedom, of beaute.

How different is this woman from her whom Vergil compares to Diana upon the banks of the Eurotas and on the heights of Cynthus, followed by her thousand Oreads. The new Dido looked upon a new Aeneas,

> And saw the man, that he was lyk a knight,
> And suffisaunt of persone and of might,
> And lyk to been a veray gentil man.

With the evident purpose of blackening the crime of the traitor, Chaucer loses no opportunity of emphasizing the beauty and goodness of Dido. The "meynee" of Aeneas that he thought was lost, came, not because they were brought as prisoners, but

> for to seke
> The quene, and of her socour her beseke;
> Swich renoun was ther sprongе of her goodnesse.

The description of the gifts which Dido gave Aeneas serves the same purpose of heightening the iniquity of one who could presume to desert so noble and generous a woman.

The conversation of Dido and her sister Anne brings out in strong relief the main points of the mediaeval, romantic aspects of Chaucer's treatment of the story. The interview takes place on a moonlit night, not when

> postera Phoebea lustrabat lampade terras
> umentemque Aurora polo dimoverat umbram.
> (*Aen.* 4. 6–7)

The role of Anna is changed from that of the sister who asked *placitone etiam pugnatis amori?* to that of one who "som-del

withstood" the queen's passion.[10] Dido's simple statement of her love and heart's desire,

> I wolde fain to him y-wedded be,

offers a striking contrast to the violent struggles of the Vergilian Elissa:

> si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet
> ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali, . . .
> huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae. . . .
> sed mihi vel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat
> vel pater omnipotens abigat me fulmine ad umbras,
> pallentis umbras Erebo noctemque profundam,
> ante pudor, quam te violo aut tua iura resolvo.
> (*Aen.* 4. 15 ff)

In marked contrast to this omission of all reference to Dido's violation of her oath is the emphasis which Chaucer lays on the vows of loyalty which Aeneas swore. Nor are the gentle words of the queen when she has discovered that Aeneas intends to leave her, and

> She asketh him anoon, what him mislyketh—
> "My dere herte, which that I love most?"

much like the passionate cry of the angry woman,

> dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum
> posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?
> (*Aen.* 4. 305–6)

It is a descent from the heights of passionate tragedy to the levels of sentimental romance.

As the author of the *Eneas* is inclined to discount the inter-

[10] But cf. *Hous of Fame*, where Chaucer has preserved a natural touch in making Dido say to Anna, "that she the cause was / That she first louede Eneas," which is the Vergilian "tu lacrimis evicta meis," etc. (*Aen.* 4. 548–9.)

vention of the gods, and explain everything as due to human means, so Chaucer too shows the rationalizing spirit. This is less evident in the *Hous of Fame* than in the *Legend*, although in the former poem in the account of the death of Palinurus no mention is made of the God of Sleep, who, in the Vergilian narrative, is responsible for his fall. Chaucer merely says that he saw a picture which showed

> how he loste his steresman,
> Which that the stere, or he took keep,
> Smot over-bord, lo! as he sleep.

In the later poem, on the other hand, the tendency is strongly marked. Chaucer cannot understand exactly how it was that when Eneas came to the temple of Juno,

> Full prively his wey than hath he nome,

and yet he cannot quite bring himself to believe the explanation that Vergil offers:

> I cannot seyn if that hit be possible,
> But Venus hadde him maked invisible —
> Thus seith the book, with-outen any lees.

The part which the gods, Venus, Jupiter, and Mercury as their messenger, play in securing a welcome for the Trojans in Carthage, is entirely omitted, and Chaucer is even disposed to doubt that Cupid had anything to do — in person — with Dido's passion. He lays the grounds of her love in the pity that she felt for this "disherited" stranger.

> But natheles, our autor telleth us
> That Cupido, that is the god of love,
> At preyere of his moder, hye above,
> Hadde the lyknes of the child y-take,
> This noble queene enamoured to make
> On Eneas; but, as of that scripture,
> Be as be may, I make of hit no cure.

Perhaps this is due to Chaucer's desire to lay all the blame for Dido's despair and death on his mortal hero, or perhaps to the rationalizing tendency of the time and the unwillingness to believe in any pagan deity but the goddess Fortune.

While Vergil was the main source of Chaucer's version of the story, a few touches in the narrative, such as Dido's plea, "Let me with yow ryde," are due to Ovid.[11] Perhaps something of the romantic attitude is a reflection of the sentimentality of Ovid as well as of the spirit of the times. Gower's treatment of the episode is based on Ovid's *Heroides*. In the *Hous of Fame*, Chaucer refers to the

> Epistle of Ovyde,
> What that she wrot or that she dyde,

and adds,

> And nere hit to long to endyte,
> By god, I wolde hit here wryte.

In the *Legend* he states at the outset that he intends to "take the tenour" both from the "Eneid" and from "Naso." And at the close of the poem, Ovid is referred to as "myn autour," and the first eight lines of the epistle *Dido Aeneae* are translated.

The influence of Vergil on the *Hous of Fame* is not bounded by the walls of the temple of Venus. Possibly the comparison of the desert in which Chaucer found himself when he came "out at the dores," with that of "Libye," was suggested by the previous story whose scene was laid on the African coast. There is an allusion too to Turnus and his vision of Iris, to the trumpeter Misenus

> Of whom that speketh Virgilius,

and to "Eolus, the god of winde," and his "cave of stoon." [12]

[11] *Her.* 7. 79.

[12] Chaucer locates the cave in Thrace. The adjective *Thracian* has been applied to Boreas in particular and the winds in general by

Some have suggested that the name "Ballenus" is an error for "Helenus," for he too was a seer, and the most obvious explanation of the name of the piper Atiteris is that it is merely a corruption of Vergil's Tityrus, a name which had by this time become stereotyped for a shepherd.

The most important suggestion that Chaucer derived from Vergil for his *Hous of Fame* aside from the story of the *Aeneid* in Book I, is the description of the appearance of Lady Fame herself. The details in regard to her house came from Ovid;[13] the conception of the nature and functions of Fame is neither classical nor mediaeval. To Vergil as to other classical writers, she was a mere bearer of tidings, usually ill-tidings, a *dea foeda*, a conception which was current in the Middle Ages as well. The Latin word *fama* means "rumor" rather than "fame" which has the power to determine men's reputations, as Chaucer represents the goddess.[14] The conditions in the house of twigs have more resemblance to the idea of Fame as Rumor, and the description of the struggle between

A lesing and a sad soth-sawe

was probably suggested by Vergil's characterization of Fame as

tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri.
(*Aen.* 4. 188)[15]

But the account of the appearance of the goddess herself

the classical writers. See Ovid, *Ars Am.* 2. 382; Verg. *Aen.* 12.365; App. Rhod., *Arg.* 1. 953–954; 2. 427; Val. Flac., *Arg.* 1. 596–610; Callim., *Hym. in Del.* 26.

[13] *Met.* 12. 39–63.

[14] Perhaps he got some of the characteristics, such as her capriciousness, the suppliants for her favor, etc., from Boethius' description of Fame whom he associates with Fame.

[15] But cf. Ovid, *Met.* 12. 54–55.

was undoubtedly due to the lines in the *Aeneid*, as a comparison of the two passages will show. When Chaucer entered the hall of Fame, he saw

> A feminyne creature;
> That never formed by nature
> Nas swich another thing y-seye,
> For altherfirst, soth for to saye,
> Me thoughte that she was so lyte,
> That the lengthe of a cubyte
> Was lenger than she semed be;
> But thus sone, in a whyle, she
> Hir tho so wonderliche streighte,
> That with hir feet she th'erthe reighte,
> And with hir heed she touched hevene,
> Ther as shynen sterres sevene.
> And there-to eek, as to my wit,
> I saugh a gretter wonder yit,
> Upon hir eyen to beholde;
> But certeyn I hem never tolde;
> For as fele eyen hadde she
> As fetheres upon foules be,
> Or weren on the bestes foure,
> That goddes trone gunne honoure,
> As John writ in th'apocalips.
> Hir heer, that oundy was and crips,
> As burned gold hit shoon to see.
> And soth to tellen, also she
> Had also fele up-stonding eres
> And tonges, as on bestes heres;
> And on hir feet wexen saugh I
> Partriches winges redely.

With the addition of a few Biblical details, this corresponds closely to the Vergilian account:

> extemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes,
> Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum:

mobilitate viget virisque adquirit eundo,
parva metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras
ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit.
illam Terra parens ira inritata deorum
extremam, ut perhibent, Coeo Enceladoque sororem
progenuit pedibus celerem et pernicibus alis,
monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae,
tot vigiles oculi subter (mirabile dictu)
tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris.

Chaucer evidently misread *perdicibus* for *pernicibus*, and so transformed the "swift wings" of Fama into "partriches winges." The expression is rendered correctly in *Troilus and Criseyde*, where he uses this same description:

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
Was through-out Troye y-fled with preste winges.

On one of the pillars in the House of Fame stood Vergil. He was not, however, with that group of writers, Omeer, Dares, Tytus, Guido, Gaufride, and "eek he, Lollius," who were "besy for to bere up Troye." His fame rests upon another basis.

Ther saugh I stonde on a pileer
That was of tinned yren cleer,
That Latin poete, dan Virgyle,
That bore hath up a longe whyle
The fame of Pius Eneas.

"Homer's iron is admirably represented," says a note in Bell's *Chaucer*, "as having been by Virgil covered over with tin." Succeeding editors have repeated this, and interpreted it to mean that the *Aeneid* is simply the *Iliad* with a thin veneer of polish and brilliance. But it seems scarcely credible that one who admired Vergil as Chaucer evidently

did, would make a criticism so unfavorable to the poet who heads the list of those worthy of all reverence by his "litel book" of *Troilus and Criseyde*. Such subtle criticism would be a little too modern for Chaucer, too, and besides, "Omeer" was not in as high repute in the Middle Ages as "Virgyle." The explanation must be sought elsewhere, I think, and most naturally in some such significance for tin as that which iron has in its association in alchemy with the planet Mars. The other metals spoken of in this passage have some such meaning, and it is much more reasonable to assign to the use of tin a "scientific" rather than a literary significance. Josephus stands on a pillar of iron and lead, the metals of Mars and Saturn, because he tells of wars and of dire events such as the influence of Saturn was supposed to cause. Statius, Lucan, and Homer and the other writers on the story of Troy stand on iron pillars, for their poems tell of the deeds of Mars. Ovid's column is of copper, the metal of Venus, for he was to the Middle Ages preeminently the poet of love, and Claudian, who wrote of the Underworld, appropriately stands on a pillar of sulphur. In alchemy, tin has the same sign as the planet Jupiter,[16] and in the *Booke of Quinte Essence*, there is a direction involving the use of a "plate of venus or Iubiter," that is, of copper or tin. While the *Aeneid* is truly a record of strife, so that it is fitting that its author should stand on a pillar of Mars' metal, its hero, the "Pius Eneas," is *Iovis de gente suprema*, and any one familiar with the story must have observed not only that Jupiter's name is mentioned more frequently than that of any of the other gods, but that his control is constant, and that the deeds of Mars are in almost every instance directed by the will and power of the *pater omnipotens*. Throughout the poem the *imperia*

[16] See *New English Dictionary*, article on *tin*, and Skeat, *Works of Chaucer*, Note on *C. T.*, G 820.

Iovis are supreme; the *divum pater atque hominum rex* bows only to the Fates.[17] I, therefore, should emend Bell's note to read, "Mars' iron is admirably represented as having been by Vergil covered over with the tin of Jupiter."

Gower's story of the magic mirror has already been commented on. He also showed his acquaintance with that class of legends which associated Vergil with women, most of them not very complimentary to the poet. In the eighth book of the *Confessio Amantis*, Elde comes into the presence of Venus accompanied by David, Solomon, Samson, Vergil, and Ovid, all old men who had been servants to love.

> And ek Virgile of aquaintance
> I sih, wher he the maiden preide,
> Which was the doghter, as men seide,
> Of themperour whilom of Rome.

He was probably thinking here of the story, told in detail by Stephen Hawes,[18] of how Vergil was once placed in an awkward position by the emperor's daughter with whom he was carrying on a flirtation. She had promised to draw him up to her window in a basket, but when she got him halfway up, left him swinging in the air, to be the laughing-stock of the whole city. In revenge he, by his magic powers, put out all the fires in Rome. One version, however, tells how Vergil outwitted the princess, for, having learned beforehand of her intentions, he caused one of his familiar spirits to take his place in the basket, and the fiend was perfectly capable of extricating himself from the predicament.

These two stories show how far Gower was from Chaucer in any real sympathy with the author of the *Aeneid*. For the Vergilian element in his poetry is practically included

[17] See *Aen.* 2. 326, 689; 1. 257–296; 4. 198–278, 331, 614; 5. 687–699, 726, 747; 9. 77–122, 128–9, 630–1, 801–5; 10. 606–27; 12. 565, 791–842, 895.

[18] *Pastime of Pleasure*, chap. XXIX.

within their limits. He does tell the story of Aeneas and Dido,[19] but he owes it almost entirely to Ovid, for the passage is chiefly concerned with the letter written by the deserted queen. No one could deny that he knew the *Aeneid*, but it is clear that Ovid was his favorite author. He refers to the war with Turnus, but this is also probably from Ovid rather than from Vergil, the marginal summary being a virtual translation of a few lines in the *Metamorphoses*.[20] In his Latin poetry, too, there are innumerable Ovidian echoes, whereas definite Vergilian influence is practically lacking. Chaucer's contemporaries, however, were not so ignorant of Vergil as to be unable to use him as a standard, for Hoccleve, in his *Regiment of Princes*, in the famous address to Chaucer, after comparing him to Cicero in "rhethorik," and to Aristotle in "philosophie," says,

> the steps of Virgile in poesie
> Thow filwedest eeke.

Another phase of the mediaeval tradition still surviving in the fourteenth century, is to be found in the opening sentences of *Gawain and the Greene Knight*. "After the siege and the assault of Troy, when that burg was destroyed and burnt to ashes, and the traitor tried for his treason, the noble Aeneas and his kin sailed forth to become princes and patrons of well-nigh all the Western Isles." [21] Here is evident that inconsistency in the character of Aeneas that is found in the Middle Ages. According to the accounts of

[19] *Conf. Am.* 4. 5.

[20] *Met.* 14. 449–451.

[21] Siþen þe sege and þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
Þe bor3 brittened and brent to bronde3 and aske3,
Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,
Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, and his highe kinde,
Þat siþen depreced prouinces, and patrounes become
Welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles.

Dares and Dictys, of Benoit and Guido, and of Joseph of Exeter, who constituted the mediaeval authorities for the story of the fall of Troy, Antenor and Aeneas were responsible for the plot that caused the destruction of the city. On the other hand, Aeneas was the founder of the Roman nation, and so indirectly of nearly all the other nations of Europe, and such a blot on his fame as complicity in the plot for the overthrow of Troy, was a difficult stain to eradicate. Hence many authors glossed over or disregarded entirely his part in the transaction, Antenor became the arch-traitor,

> The tulk that the trammes of tresoun ther wroht,

and the subsequent adventures of Aeneas were stressed, as they are in these lines of *Gawain and the Greene Knight*.

The conflict was carried on into the fifteenth century.[22] Lydgate's *Troy Book*, one of a long series of versions of the mediaeval Troy story, is professedly based on the Latin prose narrative of Guido delle Colonne, and accordingly tells at length of the plot of Antenor and Aeneas. There follows a passage of nearly thirty lines, in which Lydgate summarizes the story of the *Aeneid*, with the conclusion,

> Ye may al seen, by ful sovereyn style
> From point to point compiled in Virgile,
> Written and made sithen go ful yore;
> For Troie boke speketh of hym no more.[23]

This is obviously an attempt to reconcile the two narratives by the expedient of calling Vergil's account a mere continuation of Guido's. The difficulty here, however, is not insur-

[22] And even into the sixteenth. See William Warner, *Albion's England*, chap. XIII, and *Addition in Proese to the Second Booke*. Dante too had been distressed by the fact that Julius Caesar, founder of the Empire, had driven Cato into exile. See, e.g., *Conv.* iii. 5.

[23] *Troy Book*, 4. 1434 ff.

mountable, for Lydgate bestows no word of praise upon Aeneas, not even the one word "noble," like the Gawain poet, but with inherited romantic sympathy with Dido, calls him the man that "falsede . . . . Dido, of wommanhede flour."

Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* was a translation of Boccaccio's popular book, *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, so that the Monk of Bury cannot be held responsible for anything that occurs there. It is interesting to note, however, that the story of the *Salvatio Romae*, told in connection with the Pantheon at Rome, and without mention of Vergil, finds a place in "Bochas," and that here too is that curious alternative version of the death of Dido, which is told in Caxton's *Eneydos*.

Caxton's book is one of his numerous translations from the French, and was printed at Westminster in 1490. His original was probably the *Livre des Eneydes*, printed at Lyons by Guillaume le Roy in 1483. It has no title-page, but the colophon runs as follows: "Here fynyssheth the boke of Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle, whiche hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, And oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me Wyllm̃ Caxton." The French, however, was far from a translation of the *Aeneid*, though most of the incidents and much of the language are based directly on the Latin. But as was the case in the *Romans d'Eneas*, the writer treated his original with the utmost freedom, and expanded, abridged, added, omitted, and changed the order of events at will. The story begins, in the true mediaeval fashion, at the beginning. After telling of the building of Troy by Priam, who in all other versions was the last king of that city, but here is represented as the original founder, it proceeds to the story of Polydorus' death and burial. Omitting all mention of Sinon, the wooden horse, Laocoön, and the loss of Creusa, it tells of the departure of Aeneas,

and of his adventures up to the time of the storm. Then the author relates Boccaccio's story of Dido, marveling that he did not follow the version of Vergil. "I was abasshed," he says, "and had grete merveylle how bochace, whiche is an auctour so gretly renommed, hath transposed, or atte leste dyversifyed, the falle and caas otherwyse than vyrgyle hath in his fourth booke of Eneydos. . . . I have enterprysed fyrste and to-fore, for better, and to understande the mater, I have purposed to recyte here the caas and falle after the oppynyon of Iohn bocace." Up to the founding of the city of Carthage, the two accounts are very similar. But Dido's death, according to Boccaccio, had nothing to do with Aeneas. She was wooed by a powerful neighboring king, but, still true to her first husband, she did not wish to marry him. He uttered such dire threats against the state, however, that her subjects were made desperate. By misrepresenting the situation to her, so that she thought that a neighboring king wished one of her men to come to his court, they drew from her the statement that everyone should be willing to sacrifice himself for his country. Then they told her the true state of affairs, and she, in distress, asked for three months to consider the proposal. At the end of this time, still unwilling to marry, but dreading to bring upon her people the consequences of a refusal, she built a huge pyre in the midst of the city on pretense of making a sacrifice, and slew herself thereon, in the presence of her subjects.[24] After this version of the story, the French

[24] See Justin, *Historiae*, Bk. xviii, chaps. 4, 5, 6. Cf. Jerome, *Adv. Jov.* I. 43 and Ausonius, *Ep.* 118. 7. Turbervile translated this Epigram under the title *Of Dido and the Truth of her Death.* See also Warner, *Addition in Proese to the Second Booke of Albion's England.* According to all historians, Dido and Aeneas could not have been contemporaries, and the critics have at various times expended much labor in defending Vergil's anachronism. Boccaccio's account therefore is more likely to be historically correct than Vergil's.

translator puts the account given by Vergil, following his original fairly closely in the general outlines, but diverging in some details and expanding enormously, thus naturally detracting from the forcefulness and dignity of the Latin. The story up through the death of Dido occupies over two thirds of the entire narrative.

The funeral games in the fifth book of the *Aeneid* are assigned only a few lines in the *Eneydos*. The incident of the burning of the ships is told at length, and the mention of the temple of Apollo in the beginning of the sixth book of Vergil is the starting-point for a long digression on the stories of Daedalus and Minos of Crete. The descent to Avernus, however, is disposed of in a few words of disbelief and disapproval. "There dwelled the goddesse Cryspyne,[25] whiche shulde have brought eneas in-to helle, . . . but this mater I leve, for it is fayned, and not to be bylevyd. who that will knowe how eneas wente to helle, late hym rede virgyle, claudyan, or the pistelles of Ovyde, & there he shall fynde more than trouthe. For whiche cause I leve it and wryte not of it." With this it is interesting to compare Chaucer's omission of the bulk of the fifth and sixth books, and his unwillingness to admit the truth of any of the supernatural events. The writer of the *Eneydos* consistently omits all such elements in the last six books, which he otherwise follows as closely as may be expected. There is no mention of the activities of Juno or Allecto, of the changing of the ships into sea-nymphs, or of the marvelous armor which was the gift of Venus to her son. The spectral image of Aeneas, which lured Turnus on board one of the ships, is attributed, not to Juno, but to the Fiend![26] After

[25] The French has here "crespie," which might mean "wrinkled," referring to Vergil's *longaeva sacerdos*. Caxton evidently thought it was the name of the Sibyl.

[26] Cf. the treatment of the supernatural events in the *Pharsalia* in the mediaeval lives of Caesar.

the death of Turnus, which closes the *Aeneid*, the author of the *Eneydes*, inspired by the same desire for completeness which animated Maphaeus Vegius, gives in three additional chapters, the subsequent history of Aeneas and Lavinia, and a list of the Alban kings.

This analysis of the *Eneydos* has been given, partly for comparison with Chaucer, a century earlier, and partly to show the enormous strides forward which were taken by Gavin Douglas, Caxton's arch-critic, twenty-five years later. This book, the first version of the *Aeneid* in England in the vernacular, seems separated by far more than a quarter of a century from Douglas' *Virgil*, the first real translation of the Roman epic in the English tongue. It was the revival of classical learning under the humanists which wrought this great change in the attitude toward Vergil.

CHAPTER IV

VERGIL AND HUMANISM

In general, the humanistic revival of the sixteenth century brought into English literature a closer adherence to fact in its treatment of the classics. The distortions and mistaken emphasis of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are much less marked in the sixteenth. Although Sidney believed that the Aeneas of Dares Phrygius was the "right Aeneas," and that of Vergil the "feigned," he felt that the *Aeneid* should be read, and that it could be read with profit. He himself gave evidence of a ready familiarity with the classics, including Vergil, by allusions and quotations, the very inaccuracy of some of which indicates that he is quoting from a well-stored memory. The constant presence of quotations and echoes in Elizabethan prose and poetry is an answer to his query, "Who is it that ever was a scholar that doth not carry away some verses of Virgil, Horace, or Cato, which in his youth he learned, and even to his old age serve him for hourly lessons?"

For this familiar use of Latin and Greek was based upon the new classical education of the humanists. Radical changes had been made in material and method from the schools of the Middle Ages, and in order to understand thoroughly the entrance of this new material into the literature of the Renaissance, it is necessary to consider first the new cultural background made possible by the schools and colleges of sixteenth century England, in contrast with that created by the work in the mediaeval Universities, and then to examine the literature itself.

The controversy over the relative merits of the Ancients

and the Moderns is not a thing of modern growth. It is far older than the time of Swift. A thirteenth century battle of the books was waged on the pages of Henri d'Andeli's *Battle of the Seven Arts*, in which the forces of Grammar from Orleans, among whom Vergil bore a lance in company with other classics, were routed by the army of Logic, aided by Civil and Canon Law, the "New Aristotle" being a prominent warrior on their side. And this battle and its outcome are typical of the educational situation in the Middle Ages. Chartres was the main stronghold of classical culture on the continent in the twelfth century, Orleans in the early part of the thirteenth, but they could not hold their own against Paris and Bologna. John of Salisbury, that powerful advocate and preëminent example of the value of a classical training, tells in the *Metalogicus* of his education at Chartres under the instruction of Bernard, but the time soon came when, as Rashdall says, "Aristotle was accepted as a well-nigh final authority. . . . The awakened intellect of Europe busied itself with expounding, analyzing and debating the new treasures unfolded before its eyes, and the Classics dropped again, for the mass of students whose reading was bounded by the prescribed curriculum of the Universities, into the obscurity from which they had for a brief period emerged. . . . For the attainment of the Mastership in the Liberal Arts, Logic and Philosophy were the essential requisites: and at that early period in the history of the examination system it was soon found that the establishment of a prescribed curriculum of studies and the offer of a premium to those who pursue it is fatal to all subjects excluded therefrom." [1] And Vergil, along with

[1] Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1895. Vol. I, pp. 68, 69. The exclusion of Aristotle here and elsewhere from the company of the "Classics," means simply that his works were studied, not as literature, but as textbooks in Logic and Philosophy.

other Roman writers, was so excluded. John Garland, master of Grammar at Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century, voiced the last plea for the restoration of classical studies at his University. His, however, was a solitary voice. "The comparison," says Rashdall, "of John of Salisbury's account of his education in the first half of the twelfth century with the earliest University Statute at the beginning of the next century, enables us to trace the startling rapidity of this decline in literary culture. Grammar is prescribed as one of the subjects of the Examination, but Grammar is represented solely by the works of Priscian and Donatus. Rhetoric receives hardly more than a complimentary recognition: the Classics are not taken up at all. The student's whole attention is concentrated upon Logic and Aristotle. Boys in Grammar Schools might still learn their Grammar by construing Ovid or 'Cato,' but henceforth the poets, the historians, the orators of ancient Rome were considered unworthy of the attention of ripe students of fourteen or sixteen in the University Schools." [2]

These statements are based upon an examination of the curricula indicated in University statutes and in certain time-tables of the arrangement of lectures which filled a student's day. We know, for instance, from the list of books prescribed for the degrees of A.B. and A.M. in Paris in 1254, that Aristotle was the chief author whom they were required to study, and that Vergil appears to have found no place in the curriculum. The same thing is true of Paris in 1366, of Oxford in 1267 and 1408, and of Leipzig in 1410. The course of study at Oxford was much like that at Paris, although in theory the *trivium* and *quadrivium* were still regarded as a part of the requirement for the A.M. degree. Yet they did not appear in the formal list of studies. In

[2] Rashdall, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 71, 72.

1431 at Oxford, however, the curriculum of the candidate for a Master's degree must include "rhetoricam per tres terminos, videlicet *rhetoricam* Aristotelis, seu quartam *Topicorum* Boethii, aut Tullium in nova rhetorica, vel Ovidium *Metamorphoseos* sive poetriam Virgilii," an interesting indication of the slow return of the Latin classics. But Aristotle was still the favorite. Not only is he placed at the head of such a list as that given above, but there is a record that in 1448 a Bachelor at Oxford begged that a lecture upon the *Georgics* of Vergil which had been imposed upon him be changed to one upon the *De Anima*. The method of classroom procedure in the Middle Ages, too, was not conducive to any intimate knowledge of the authors read. On account of the difficulty of procuring manuscripts, the students were usually unsupplied with copies of the text. The lecturer, therefore, read the book aloud, pausing frequently and at great length to read the comments of learned men upon the passage, which usually appeared in the form of a marginal gloss, and to add some remarks of his own. In this way, the original words of the writer were frequently nearly lost and forgotten in the midst of such a wilderness of comment. One of the things insisted upon by the humanists was a careful study of the texts themselves, with resultant formation of independent judgment based upon personal knowledge.

At the close of his poem, *The Battle of the Seven Arts*, Henri d'Andeli prophesies thus:

> Sirs, the times are given to emptiness;
> Soon they will go entirely to naught,
> For thirty years this will continue,
> Until a new generation will arise,
> Who will go back to Grammar.[3]

[3] Henri d'Andeli, *Battle of the Seven Arts*. Edited and translated by Louis John Paetow. Univ. of Cal. 1914. ll. 450–54.

But in spite of the protests of men like John of Salisbury, Alexander Neckam, John Garland, Gerald de Barri, and Henri d'Andeli, it was much more than thirty years before the New Learning may be said to have begun. D'Andeli's poem was probably written in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and it is from the classical studies of Petrarch, nearly a century later, that we date the revival of the interest in the ancient authors. And although the poet looked to the North for the coming of the "new generation," and believed that no good could come out of Lombardy, yet it was in Italy that the "first modern man" was born.

Although Petrarch was not primarily an educator, his influence was nevertheless very great. His revolt against scholasticism, his successful search for Ciceronian texts, his love and understanding of the classical writers which made them his friends rather than merely the authors of texts to be studied, all pointed the way which later pedagogues followed in their writings and in their classroom practice. Schoolmasters like Vittorino da Feltre, who taught in the "Pleasant House" at Mantua, a city full of the memories of Vergil, Guarini, who lectured on Greek and Latin literature at Ferrara, and Politian at Florence, all included Vergil in their courses. Treatises like the *De Liberorum Educatione* of Aeneas Sylvius advocated the study of the classics, and Maffeo Vegio, the author of the thirteenth book of the *Aeneid*, laid special emphasis on the importance of studying Vergil in his *De Educatione Liberorum*. He still clung to the old allegorical interpretation of his poems, as did Petrarch also, but he put himself on record as Vergil's defender against all attacks.

The cause of the ancient classics was helped along by the introduction of the study of Greek into Italy. Pilatus, the instructor of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and Chrysoloras were

among the first to bring the language across the Adriatic, and the latter gathered about him many pupils who eventually spread the new study all over Europe. But unfortunately for the literary supremacy of Italy, her scholars eventually ran their classicism into a formalism which checked spontaneity, and justified to a certain extent Norden's seemingly paradoxical remark that the humanists killed the Latin language.

Meanwhile humanism was moving north. Already in the fourteenth century, classicism was revived at Paris under Nicolas of Clemangis, with a strong protest against the scholastic method. In the fifteenth century, German educators like Hegius, Wessel, Agricola and von Lange, were revolting against scholasticism, and there were two opposing parties in the Universities, with the humanist faction steadily growing in power. Here the aim of most of the humanists, like Wimpfeling, was to use the new-found knowledge as the basis of social and religious reform. But here too the study of the classics degenerated in the later Renaissance into a formal Ciceronianism, the chief object of which was to impart a perfect Latin style after the manner of the great prose master of Rome. The emphasis in the curricula of the Gymnasien was definitely placed on the careful study of Cicero, almost to the exclusion of other writers. And the study of all the classics became narrow, confining itself to drill in Latin Grammar, and a detailed examination, both grammatical and rhetorical, of Cicero, Ovid, Terence, Vergil, and the historians, with the redeeming trait of requiring close application to the texts themselves.

The story of the coming of humanism to England is well known, and the names of Erasmus, Colet, Sir Thomas More, and the scarcely less familiar ones of Selling, Linacre, Grocyn, and Lyly, mark a period of intense enthusiasm for the new learning, and of a belief, especially on the part of Colet,

the founder of the famous school for boys at the eastern end of St. Paul's churchyard, that the knowledge of Latin and Greek could best be used to further the familiarity of the common people with the Scriptures. It was, however, largely an academic revival of the interest in Greek and Latin, and the classics were not yet assimilated in vernacular literature. It was Lyly's *Grammar*, used for many years in the schools, which was representative of this academic nature of the classical enthusiasm of these years, while the allusions in the dramas of his grandson, John, show that in the days of Queen Elizabeth the appeal of the classics was no longer merely to scholars. The path of those who, like Cheke and Ascham, were endeavoring to carry on the torch lighted by Erasmus and his contemporaries was by no means free from obstructions. The opponents of the study of Greek called themselves the Trojans, and assumed the names of Priam, Hector, and Paris. Tyndale tells how they showed in their pulpits their opposition to the study of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, "some beating the pulpit with their fists for madness, and roaring out with open and foaming mouth, that if there were but one Terence or Virgil in the world, and that same in their sleeves, and a fire before them, they would burn them therein, though it should cost them their lives."

But all their violence could not stop entirely the progress of humanistic education. And the reading of Vergil, which, as we have seen, was rare in the preceding centuries, so that Chaucer's knowledge of him stands out as remarkable, was now one of the most important parts of the curriculum of both school and college. His works were read, not only for their poetic beauty, but for their practical value as well. Cardinal Wolsey, who endowed a school at Ipswich and a college at Oxford, planned the course of study for the boys in the school himself. The classes at Ipswich were to

study in succession Cato, Aesop and Terence, and in the fourth year, "Virgil himself, of all poets the chief, . . . whose verses should be read with a beautiful sonorous voice, so that their majesty may be better felt," and after Vergil, Cicero, Sallust, Caesar, Horace, and Ovid.

Copies have come down to us of the time-tables of classes at Eton and at Winchester about 1530. At the former school, the fourth form on Friday and Saturday read "Vergilii buccolica," and the fifth, sixth, and seventh forms, on the same days, "Vergilii Eneis." For the fifth form at Winchester, "There constructyons is throwgh owte ye weke unto fryday Vergills Eglogs & an other." The page detailing the work of the higher forms is lost, but undoubtedly they too read "Vergilii Eneis." The time-table of Westminster School thirty years later includes Vergil and Homer for the sixth and seventh forms. The school statutes of the Free Grammar School of St. Bees in Cumberland, drawn up in 1583, include Vergil in the curriculum. And finally, Charles Hoole's *New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole*, published in 1659, but written in 1636, while it suggests new methods of teaching, gives a list of the books which were then and had been for many years in use in the grammar schools throughout the country, a list which includes Vergil, Ovid, Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and Terence, as well as some of the Latin writers of the Renaissance.

Meanwhile, writers like Sir Thomas Elyot and Roger Ascham were advocating the study of Vergil. He must be studied, says Elyot in his *Boke Called the Gouernour*, and it will prove an enchantment. "What thinge can be more familiar than his bucolikes? nor no wark so nigh approcheth to the commune daliaunce and maners of children, and the praty controversies of the simple shepherds, therin contained, wonderfully rejoyceth the childe that hereth hit well declared as I knowe by myne owne experience. In

his Georgikes, Lorde! what plesaunt varietie there is: the divers graynes, herbes, and flowers that be there described, that reding therin, hit semeth to a man to be in a delectable gardeine or paradise; what ploughe man knoweth so moche of husbandry as there is expressed?"

The study of the classics did not stop with the grammar schools as it had done in the Middle Ages. While Aristotle and scholasticism were not driven immediately from the Universities, yet new colleges were founded in both great institutions of higher education whose special purpose was the fostering of the new learning. In the late fifteenth century Petrarch was being read at Cambridge, an indication that an interest in the classics was beginning, and permission was given for a vacation lecture on Terence. In 1506 Christ's College was founded, where the *bonae artes* were to be studied, and a college lecturer to give lectures on the "works of poets and orators." In 1540 the Regius Professorships were founded, and Ascham, writing to a friend a few years later, says, "Cambridge is quite another place, so substantially and splendidly has it been endowed by the royal munificence." Going on to speak of the study of Greek, he says, "Sophocles and Euripides are more familiar authors than Plautus was in your time." But he continues, "Nor do we disregard the Latin authors, but study with the greatest zeal the choicest writers of the best period." And in 1546, Trinity College was founded to be a college of literature, the sciences, philosophy, the "good arts," and sacred theology.[4]

Nor was Oxford much behind. The addition to the curriculum in 1431 of the alternatives of Cicero, Ovid, and Vergil, has already been mentioned. In 1517 was chartered Corpus Christi College. "The statutes of Corpus

[4] See J. B. Mullinger, *A History of the University of Cambridge.* Vol. I, pp. 433 ff.

Christi College," says Lyte in his *History of Oxford*, "show very plainly the influence of the Renaissance. In the very first section, there is an apology for the use of barbarous words not known to Cicero. Some acquaintance with the works of Roman poets, orators, and historians, no less than with logic and philosophy is required of all candidates for scholarships. . . . Cicero, Sallust, Valerius Maximus, Suetonius, Pliny, Livy, and Quintilian are enumerated as the prose writers, and Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Juvenal, Terence, and Plautus, as the poets to be expounded by the lecturer on humanity." There was also to be a lecturer on Greek grammar and literature, "an officer unknown in any earlier college." [5]

And this training in the schools and colleges evidently made the reading of Vergil popular. For the day-book of John Dorne, an Oxford book-seller, indicates that the text of Vergil was in great demand. In the year 1520, for which the record was kept, he sold twenty-nine copies of Vergil, this number being greater than that of the works of any other classic writer except Cicero, Terence, whose popularity was due partly to the vogue of plays on the model of Roman comedy, and Aristotle.

Throughout the earlier years of the century, Greek was taught at the Universities, and bade fair to rival Latin in popularity and influence. But it was perhaps more "the learned ardor" of a comparatively small circle of scholars, and did not spread widely enough to survive the disturbing events of the fourth decade of the century, when the attendance at the Universities rapidly declined. By Mary's reign, the teaching of Greek had practically ceased at both Oxford and Cambridge, although it was soon revived. Latin, however, with its firm basis of centuries of use, held

[5] See H. C. M. Lyte, *A History of the University of Oxford from the Earliest Times to the Year 1536*. Lond. 1886. p. 412.

its own. So Vergil, as opposed to the Greek writers, had in his favor not only the accident of having written in the more familiar language, but also the long popularity of his work and the unbroken tradition of reverence which had been associated with his name for many centuries. It is not strange, therefore, that in his particular departments of the eclogue and the epic, Vergil held the field; his authority in the pastoral was threatened more by his Renaissance imitators than by his Greek master.

The general result of this new element in the education of the Renaissance was a broadening in the scope of subject-matter and allusion in literature. This enrichment of the literary material naturally appeared first in Italy, where, as we have seen, the educational change began. Both Petrarch and Boccaccio wrote Eclogues after the Vergilian model, and set the example for the later Renaissance writers, such as Mantuan and Sannazaro. It was a visit to the tomb of Vergil that first instilled into Boccaccio the desire to write poetry. To Petrarch Vergil was one of the "two eyes" of his discourse. His love of Vergil dated back to his boyhood days, when his father discovered him at Montpellier reading the classics instead of studying law, and threw the books into the fire. One of the volumes that the father repentantly snatched back from destruction on seeing his son's tears, was the *Rhetoric* of Cicero, and the other was a copy of Vergil, probably the same which has come down to us enriched by marginal comments and the record of domestic happenings on its pages. The memory of a Vergilian phrase, *labor omnia vicit*, cheered Petrarch in his famous ascent of Mont Ventoux, and more than a hundred quotations from his favorite poet are scattered through the pages of his familiar letters. In his second *Letter to Cicero*, he says that he had two guides, Cicero himself in prose, and Vergil in verse. He alludes to the story that Cicero heard

the sixth *Eclogue* recited in the theater, and exclaimed, "Spes altera Romae!" a phrase which Vergil later incorporated into his "divine poem," and says that he is sure that had Cicero lived to see the *Aeneid*, he would have agreed with Propertius in calling it greater than the *Iliad*. The verse *Letter to Vergil* himself begins, "O illustrious Maro, bright luminary of eloquence and second hope of the Latin tongue," and in that to Homer, Petrarch enters into an elaborate defense of the Latin poet against the charge of stealing from the Greek. But most interesting of all is that portion of the *Letter to Vergil* in which he asks the poet where he is and who are his companions. He then proceeds to tell of the present condition of Vergil's favorite cities, Naples, Mantua, and Rome, in the second of which he is now writing. As he wanders about the surrounding country, he says, he constantly wonders what paths, woods, and streams Vergil used to frequent, and adds, "Such thoughts as these, O Vergil, bring thee vividly before my eyes." [6] And yet Petrarch cannot break away from the allegorical interpretation of Vergil's poems, and in his old age writes, "Vergil's subject . . . is the Perfect Man . . . the winds . . . blasts of anger and mad desire. . . . Aeolus is our reason. . . . Venus . . . is pleasure."

But in spite of his admiration of Vergil and his use of him as a model in verse, Petrarch was exceedingly careful to avoid any verbal echoes of his lines. He was incredulous when a pupil, whom he had been cautioning against this very thing, accused him of having committed such a fault, and horrified when a Vergilian ending of one of his verses was pointed out to him in proof.

His followers, however, were not so careful. Maffeo Vegio, or, to use the Latin form of his name, Maphaeus

[6] See *Petrarch's Letters to Classical Authors*, translated . . . by Mario Emilio Cosenza, Ph.D. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1910.

Vegius, presumed to complete the *Aeneid* by adding a thirteenth book, Politian imitated Vergil in his *Sylvae*, and Sannazaro not only wrote *Piscatory Eclogues* which owed much to the *Eclogues*, and drew some inspiration for his *Arcadia* from the *Gallus*, but spent twenty years on a Vergilian poem on the birth of Christ, *De Partu Virginis*. Mantuan's *Eclogues*, not very Vergilian, it is true, but written in the pastoral tradition derived from Vergil, were more popular than those of the master himself, and were used extensively in the grammar schools as textbooks. In the next century came some imitations of the *Georgics*, Alamanni's *Coltivazione*, and Rucellai's *Api*. All these were justified by the doctrine preached in Vida's *Art of Poetry*, itself full of Vergilian and Homeric echoes, namely to imitate the ancients, and especially Vergil, who was to him the "father of verse," and to steal boldly and constantly from the classic authors.

> Come then, ye youths, and urge your generous toils;
> Come, strip the ancients, and divide the spoils
> Your hands have won.[7]

In the epic, since the days of Petrarch, the *Aeneid* had been the model for the poets of the Renaissance. He himself had written a Latin epic, *Africa*, with Scipio Africanus as its hero, and by his precepts as well as by his example had set the fashion of imitating Vergil. The epics of Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, and their followers show the classical influence obscured by the romantic atmosphere, but in the *Jerusalem Delivered*, Tasso's borrowings from the Latin epic are numerous and obvious. The first line,

> Canto l'armi pietose, e 'l Capitano,

is only the beginning of a paragraph which closely follows the opening of the *Aeneid*. Allecto appears, with familiar

[7] Pitt's translation.

characteristics, in the eighth and ninth books, the latter of which contains the exploits of the maiden warrior, Clorinda. There are numerous Vergilian names, such as Latinus and Picus. In the eleventh book is an account of the miraculous cure of Godfrey's arrow-wound, which is almost a literal translation of the description of the healing of Aeneas' wound by Venus. The final words of the enchantress Armida to Rinaldo follow faithfully the speeches of Dido in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, and the shield of Rinaldo is clearly a reminiscence of that of Aeneas.

At about the same time in France, Ronsard was working at his *Franciade*. Inspired with the desire to become the Vergil of his country, he wrote a classical epic celebrating Francus, the mythical founder of his race, who, like the English Brutus, was of Trojan blood. In the sixteenth century, too, the Dido story was proving its popularity in Italy, France, and Germany, by becoming the subject of at least five plays, by Cinthio, Dolce, Jodelle, Knaustius, and Frischlin, which paralleled and probably had some influence on the production of similar plays in England, both by the University dramatists and by Marlowe and Nash. The influence of the *Eclogues* was perpetuated in Marot's French *Eclogues*, and that of the *Georgics* in Baïf's *Météores* and Kirchmayer's *Agricultura Sacra*. Vergilian criticism, or rather eulogy, is represented by Vida in Italy, and in France by Julius Caesar Scaliger.

As will be evident in the next chapter, the literature of England in the sixteenth century showed the same changes in the use of Vergilian and other classical material as that of the continental nations. Both prose and poetry of the Renaissance are characterized by a closer adherence to fact, an increase in the number of Vergilian allusions and references, the growing popularity of the Dido story and the gradual change from Dares to Vergil as an authority.

the widespread adoption of the eclogue form, and especially the greater amount of imitation and the change in the manner of using Vergilian material. In these changes, the translations of Vergil played a great part. Annibale Caro and Molza rendered his lines into Italian, and the work of Douglas, Surrey and Phaer undoubtedly helped to familiarize the general reader in England with his poems, and in turn, the greater knowledge of the Latin made popular the process of rendering them in the vulgar tongue.

The first to translate the *Aeneid* [8] into an English vernacular was a Scotchman, Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld. He began his work in 1512, and, according to his own statement, completed it in eighteen months, on the day of the Feast of Mary Magdalene, 1513. It comprises not only the twelve books of the *Aeneid* but the *Supplementum Aeneidos* by Maphaeus Vegius.[9] The translation itself is in rhymed five-accented couplets, though the Prologues to the separate books vary in meter. It remained in manuscript until 1553, when it was printed by William Copland, in London. This first printed edition shows several alterations from the manuscripts, for not only are the portions of the Prologues which refer to the Virgin and Purgatory omitted in deference to the anti-Catholic feeling of the time, but the whole adventure of Dido and Aeneas is passed over. This would undoubtedly have grieved the Bishop, had he known it, quite as much as had the expansion of that episode in the *Eneydos* of Caxton. For Douglas' oft-repeated claim was that he was faithful in rendering the meaning of his original. In the Prologue to Book I he says, contrasting his own treatment of the story with that of Caxton, between

[8] There had been a prose version of the *Aeneid* in Gaelic before 1400, the *Intheachta Aeniasa*, ed. by Rev. George Calder, London, 1907. The MS is found in the *Book of Ballymote*, pp. 449–485.

[9] Published at Venice in 1485.

which and the *Aeneid* there is no more resemblance than between the "devill and Sanct Austyne,"

> Quhilk did my best, as my wit mycht attene,
> Virgillis versis to follow, and nathing fene.

Fidelity to his original was necessary for him in view of his purpose in writing. In the *Dyrectioun of his Buik and the Excusation of Hym Self*, appended to the translation, he expresses his idea of the purpose and value of his work, saying that it is intended to be both pleasant and profitable, to pass the time for some people, and also to be of assistance

> To thaim wald Virgill to childryng expone.

It was his great desire that his favorite poet should become known to all his countrymen. "Go, wlgar Virgill," he says,

> Now salt thou with euery gentill Scot be kend,
> And to onletterit folk be red on hycht,
> That erst was bot with clerkis comprehend.

The greatness of his task and the exalted position of his author made him very humble, and he begged that if anything went wrong, the blame might fall on him and not on Vergil, who alone deserved the praise if things went well. The Prologue of the first book is full of "commendations of Virgill," as the marginal note expresses it. The poem opens with a passage of eulogy, characteristic of the times in its extravagance and its reiterated praise of the genius of Vergil, which is contrasted with his own humble powers. He will, however, with his master's permission, into his "rural wlgar gros, write sum savoring" of the *Aeneid*. He goes on to say that it was at the instance of "Henry Lord Sanct Clair" that he undertook the translation. A detailed discussion of Caxton's faults of omission and com-

mission, an explanation of the character of Aeneas, a criticism of Chaucer's attitude toward the hero of the poem, and a prayer to God for assistance in his work, make up the bulk of the rest of the Prologue. With a final appeal to Vergil to forgive him if he offends, he closes with a translation of the four lines which Varius and Tucca excluded from the opening of the *Aeneid*.

The Prologues to the other books are of varying importance. Some, like those to the seventh and tenth, which contain the pictures of Winter and of May, are interesting because they indicate a true love of Nature and a power of description in the Scottish bishop; some, like the marvel of alliteration prefixed to the eighth book, are of linguistic value; others are of interest because they throw light on Douglas' knowledge of or attitude toward Vergil. Further information on the last matter is furnished by the comments which he added to a part of the first book, to which he refers in his address to Lord Sinclair:

> I have alsso a schort comment compild
> To expon strange histories and termes wild.

His thorough knowledge [10] of and close dependence on the original is distinctly different from the romanticizing tendency of Chaucer and Caxton. Not that the good bishop always approves of his author's theology. He knows that the stories of the pagan gods and goddesses are "fenyeit," but contents himself with explaining in his notes or prologues the hidden meaning in these fables, and does not drop them out of the story itself or substitute the Fiend for Juno.

[10] Douglas also knew the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, as is proved by references to them in the fourth and fifth Prologues and in the *Palice of Honour*. There are also references in the latter poem to Sinon and to Vergil's magic mirror. The story of the *Aeneid* is summarized in three stanzas.

Let Virgyll hald his mawmentis to hym self;
I wirschip noder idoll, stok, nor elf,
Thocht furth I wryte so as myne autour dois.

Yet some explanation is necessary to show why he has chosen to interpret this pagan poet for his countrymen. Not only is this poet of the "sugurat tone" the

al and sum, quhat nedis moir,
Of Latyne poetis that sens wes or befoir,

but he is a moral instructor, almost a Christian in his ethical teaching. In this Douglas is carrying over the mediaeval tradition about Vergil and linking it with a more profound sympathy and reverence for what Vergil actually wrote than can be found in any of the writers of the preceding centuries. He was deeply impressed by the profundity of Vergil's philosophy, and almost despaired of understanding it himself or of making it clear to others. He believed that Aeneas represented the ideal prince and ruler, and as such was offered as a model, "an exampill and myrour to euery prince and nobyl man." In the sixth book especially Vergil showed himself as "a hie philosophour," and there

wndir the cluddes of dirk poetry
Hid lyis thair mony notable history.

The belief that Vergil was a prophet of the Messiah finds expression in the Prologue to Book VI, where Douglas says,

Thus faithfully in his Buikis he saith,
The maid cumith bryngis new lynage fra hevin.

And like many of the mediaeval writers, he finds evidences of an approach to Christian ideas in other places in the works of the pagan poet beside the fourth *Eclogue*. So his work is of value even to Christian folk. And if he does depart from the Christian faith at times,

Na wondir; he was na cristin man, per de.

In the translation itself, Douglas justifies his claim to fidelity to the Latin. His chief fault is a certain diffuseness and elaboration of the original, the bulk of the translation being much greater than that of the *Aeneid* itself. But that was characteristic of the period in which he was writing. He keeps faithfully to the "sentence" even if he is forced to change the expression at times because of "sobtell wourd or the ryme." Francis Junius accused him of making many errors, but in reality there are very few. Among them may be mentioned the translation of *viscum* as "gum or glew," and of *Italiam contra* as "enemy to Italie," and the arithmetical sum which transforms *terque quaterque beati* into

> O sevin tymes full happy and blist war thai.

Sometimes he inserts a phrase in explanation of an unusual word, as in the line,

> For nymphes, goddes of fluidis and woddis grene,

or in personal comment on the situation, as in the place where he expresses his opinion of Juno,

> Quhen that Juno, till hir euerlestand schame,
> The eterne wound hid in hir brest ay grene,
> Onto hirselfe thus spak in propir tene.

On the whole, however, this first version of the great Roman epic is a good translation. It has failed to catch quite the elevation of tone that marks the Latin, but it is frankly a rendering in a vernacular which is "imperfite" beside the Roman tongue, couched in "haymly plane termes famyliar." While it sometimes lacks dignity, however, it is spirited and full of vigor. This may be seen in the account of the death of Priam or the description of the last words of Dido, both of them excellent touchstones to deter-

mine the value of a translation. The former is especially vivid:

> But lo! Polites, ane of Priamus sonnis,
> Quhilk fra the slauchter of Pirrus away run is,
> Throw wapnis fleing and his enemyis all,
> By lang throwgangis and mony woyd hall;
> Woundit he was, and come to seek reskew;
> Ardentlie Pirrus can him fast persew,
> With grundin lance at hand so neir furth strykit,
> Almaist he haid him tuichit and arrekit.
> Quhill at the last, quhen he is cumin, I wene,
> Befoir his faderis and his moderis ene,
> Smate him doun deid, in thair sycht quhar he stude,
> The gaist he yald with habundance of blude.

Then, after the aged Priam has hurled defiance at the youthful Pyrrhus, comes the Greek's insolent answer and the murder of the king:

> To Pilleus sone, my fadir, thou most ga;
> Ber him this message, ramember weil thou tell
> Him all my werkis and deidis sa cruell.
> Now sall thou dee. And with that word, in tene,
> The auld trumbling towart the altair he drew,
> That in the hait blude of his sone, sched new,
> Funderit; and Pirrus grippis him by the hair
> With his left hand, and with the vdir all bair
> Drew furth his schynand swerd, quhilk in his syde
> Festynnit, and vnto the hiltis did it hyde.[11]

For passages like this, we can forgive the Scottish churchman for making the Sibyl a "nwn" who tells Aeneas not to forget his beads. It was a task which made the Scottish nation proud to claim him, and one of the greatest writers of his race in after years described him as

[11] *Aen.* 2. 526–532, 547–553.

More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.[12]

Four years after the translation of Gavin Douglas was published, appeared a version of the second and fourth books of the *Aeneid* by the Earl of Surrey. This is famous chiefly for the fact that it is written in blank verse, this being the first instance of its use in English. There has been much discussion of the source of his meter, some tracing it to Italian origin, others attributing it to native inspiration. George Frederick Nott, in his edition of the works of Wyatt and Surrey,[13] endeavored to show that the translation was originally written in unrhymed Alexandrines, and then cut down to decasyllabic lines. But it seems incredible that the poet should have attempted such a task. He had very probably seen the translation of Gavin Douglas, and indeed follows him quite closely at times;[14] and it is very possible that his acquaintance with the Scotchman's five-accented couplets, combined with some knowledge of the Italian version of the *Aeneid* in blank verse by Molza, who allowed his patron, Cardinal Hippolito di Medici, the credit, and influenced by some prophetic sympathy with the dislike of the Elizabethans for rhyme, supplied the impetus for the use of this new meter. Thus there may easily have been several influences which brought about the result, and it seems most probable that they were all operative to a greater or less degree.

But our chief interest is in the translation as a translation, although this is its least important side in the history

[12] Scott, *Marmion*, Canto VI. 11.

[13] Dissertation, pp. cc ff. Also see Otto Fest, *Uber Surrey's Virgilübersetzung*, Weimar, 1903.

[14] See examples in Nott's edition.

of English literature. Although Surrey undoubtedly owes something to Douglas' version, yet he has aimed to reproduce the stateliness of the Latin rather than merely to render it intelligible to "onletterit folk." He abandons, therefore, the "haymly termes" of the Scotchman, and expresses himself in a style and language more fitted to the dignity of the original. Compare, for example, the two accounts of the speech of Laocoön. Douglas translates the passage thus:

> Following ane great rowt, the priest Laocone,
> From the chief temple rynnand in full grete hye.
> On far, O wretchit peple, can he crye,
> How greit wodnes is this that 3e now mene,
> 3our enemyis away salit, gif 3e wene,
> Or gif 3e traist ony Grekis giftis be
> Without dissait, falsait and subtilite!
> Knaw 3e nocht bettir the quent Ulexes slycht?

Surrey, with less vigor, perhaps, but with a certain accession of dignity, renders the passage as follows:

> Lo! foremost of a rout that follow'd him,
> Kindled Laocoon hasted from the tower,
> Crying far off: "O wretched citizens!
> What so great kind of frensy fretteth you?
> Deem ye the Greeks our enemies to be gone?
> Or any Greekish gifts can you suppose
> Devoid of guile? Is so Ulysses known?"[15]

But while the translation is a degree more sophisticated, it is not lacking in spirit and liveliness. Being in blank verse, it has a freer movement than the later versions that were restricted by rhyme, whether that of the "fourteeners" of Phaer and Twyne, the heroic couplet of Dryden, or the

[15] *Aen.* 2. 40–44.

various other verse forms adopted by subsequent translators. To apply once more one of the touchstones for a good translation, take Surrey's version of Dido's last curse upon Aeneas:

> This I require; these words with blood I shed,
> And Tyrians, ye his stock and all his race
> Pursue with hate! reward our cinders so.
> No love nor league betwixt our peoples be.
> And of our bones some wreaker may there spring,
> With sword and flame that Trojans may pursue
> Now, from henceforth, when that our power may stretch.
> Our coasts to them contrary be for aye
> I crave of God; and our streams to their floods:
> Arms unto arms, and offspring of each race
> With mortal war each other may for-do.[16]

Surrey kept fairly close to his original, and yet, with a sweetness of flow and a freedom in the movement of his lines, remarkable in the infancy of blank verse, he has succeeded in making of his translation a poem which compares favorably with the original productions of the same period, and never outrages the spirit of his author.

In his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, William Webbe,[17] speaking of the translators of the sixteenth century, says, "I can no longer forget those learned gentlemen which tooke such profitable paynes in translating the Latine poets into our English tongue, whose deserts in that behalf are more than I can utter. Among these I euer esteemed . . . Master D. Phaer: without doubt the best: who as indeede hee had the best peece of poetry whereon to sette a most gallant verse, so performed he it accordingly." This "gallant verse" was the English "fourteener," a meter revived

[16] *Aen.* 4. 621–9.

[17] Webbe himself translated the first two *Eclogues* into English hexameters.

three centuries later by William Morris, capable of some vigor and swing, but also tending to become monotonous, and differing widely from the roll of the hexameter in Latin. Thomas Phaer's version of the first seven books of the *Aeneid* was published in 1558, just one year after Surrey's translation appeared. Four years later appeared an edition of nine books and part of the tenth, representing Phaer's work as far as he carried it before his death. Thomas Twyne, however, completed the translation, and in 1573 issued the entire poem. Ten years later the thirteenth book by Maphaeus Vegius was added. The translation was popular and went through at least five more editions by 1620.

The 1573 edition, the first containing the complete poem, is a little volume in black letter, including a translation of "Virgil's life out of Donatus and the Argument before every booke." It also has a marginal gloss, which is fully as interesting as the translation itself, for it consists, not only of a summary of the story, but of quaint explanatory remarks and naïve comment and criticism. In several places it indicates the survival of that old theory, so strong in Gavin Douglas, that the poem contains some hidden meaning. Such for instance is the note which says, "She appoints him first to the golden tree wherby is signified wisdome that ouercometh al things." Also in "Master Phaers Conclusion to his interpretation of the Aeneidos of Virgil," the translator begs for leniency from his "right worshipful maisters, and students of Universities, and such as be teachers of children and readers of this auctour in Latin," in reference to any deviations he may have made from the original, and continues, "For, (besides the diuersitie betweene a construction and a translation) you know there be many misticall secretes in this writer, which uttered in English would shew little pleasour, and in myne opinion

are better to be untouched, than to diminishe the grace of the rest with tediousnes and darknes."

In view of his meter and his quaint, simple way of translating, he is probably at his best in such a book as the fifth, where he seems to take a real delight in telling of the funeral games. His description of the foot-race is particularly good. It also illustrates the fact that he keeps the half-lines.

First and before all other bodies, nimble Nisus springs,
More swifter yet than wind, and than the dint of lightnings wings,
Next unto him, but long aloof, in distance next of place,
Doth Salius pursue, and after him a certain space,
Eurialus the thirde.
And next Eurialus sir Helimus ensues, and ioyntly than
Behold he flies, and heele to heele with him Diores ran,
With elbow next and next, and if the race do long remaine,
Is like to scape them all, or one to leave in doubtful gaine.
And towards now the latter end they drew, and wery all,
They ran with panting breathes, whan sodenly did Nisus fall,
(Unhappy man) where hefers had ben slaine by chaunce on grasse,
And ground was slypper made by certein blood that shed there was.
There now the gentle lad, (whan conquest proud he had in hande)
His legges he could not hold, nor stombling so, could longer stand,
But groueling flat he fel, and in the slime embrewd him vile.
Yet not Eurialus his freend, did he forget that while:
For quickly sterting he, sir Salius way with fote did stop,
That headlong downe in dust he ouerturnid taile and top.
Eurialus than springing skuddid forth, and through his frend,
With ioyful shoutes of men, he gets the chief at races end.[18]

Richard Stanyhurst's translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid* deserves little notice except as a metrical curiosity. It is written in quantitative hexameters, constructed according to a prosody of his own, "squaring somewhat from

[18] *Aen.* 5. 318–338.

the Latin." As a translation it is of no value, for the reader is so concerned with the structure of the lines that he cannot find much Vergil in it. But as an example of the absurd lengths to which were carried the theories of the Areopagus, that circle of Elizabethans who were rebelling against rhyme and advocating the use of classical meters in English, it is of great interest. Stanyhurst had a high opinion of his author both as a poet and as a moral teacher, and he expresses his admiration of him in the preface to his translation. "But oure Virgil," he says, ". . . dooth laboure, in telling as yt were a Cantorburye tale, too ferret owt the secretes of Nature, with woordes so fitlye coucht, wyth verses so smoothlye slychte, with sentences so featlye orderd, with orations so neatlie burnisht, with similitudes so aptly applyed, with eeche decorum so duely obserued, as in truth hee hath in right purchased too hymself thee name of a surpassing poet, thee fame of an od oratoure, and thee admiration of a profound philosopher." So high an estimate of Vergil's powers would lead us to expect something remarkable in the way of a translation, at least something approaching a sympathetic appreciation of the Latin. But one example will suffice to show that this expectation must be disappointed. What must we think of the metrical ear or the poetic sense of a translator who renders Dido's last imprecation in these strange hexameters?

Let ther one od captayne from my boans rustye be springing.
With fire eke and weepons thee caytiefs Troian auenging;
Now; then; at eeche season; what so eare streingthe mightye shal happen,
Let shoare bee to shoare, let seas contrarye toe seas stand,
And to armours, armours I do pray, let progenye bicker.[19]

[19] *Aen.* 4. 625–9.

CHAPTER V

SPENSER AND THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

IN view of the increased acquaintance with the *Aeneid* itself, it is not strange that in the sixteenth century the mediaeval ideas of the poem and of its author should gradually lose their hold on the imagination. There was, however, no decided break between the mediaeval and the Renaissance traditions of Vergil, and in the midst of the "new learning," some beliefs survived from the Middle Ages. Although the figure of Vergil the magician, never very popular in England, scarcely appears after the first quarter of the century, Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure* contains the "basket story," and the publication of Doesborcke's *Lyfe of Virgilius* indicates that there was still in England about 1530 some interest in the stories which had been in such high favor on the continent. Practically the only reference after this, however, is the allusion in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* to

> learned Maro's golden tomb:
> The way he cut an English mile in length,
> Through a rock of stone in one night's space.

But the desire of the Christian humanists to bring all their knowledge to serve the interests of the moral and religious advancement of the human race, helped to perpetuate the love for allegorical interpretation and the belief in the moral purpose of the *Aeneid*, inherited from the days of Fulgentius and of John of Salisbury. Nor was this belief incompatible with a knowledge of the original. In fact, it depended on it, and so survived in the work of

writers from Douglas to Spenser. Sir Philip Sidney, for example, reiterates in varying forms his belief that "no philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil." Douglas justified his translation of a pagan poet, and Spenser his use of allegory by reference to the hidden meaning of the work of Vergil.

The change from the mediaeval is most strongly marked in two ways, in the increase in the number of references to the poems of Vergil and of quotations from them, and in the nature of these references. The increase in the number of the references is seen most easily in the prose of the period. Nearly every other page of Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, for instance, will yield at least one quotation from Vergil, or one reference to the characters in the story which he tells. The Elizabethan critics use him constantly for illustration or confirmation. The very fact that many of them were interested in either supporting or attacking the theories of the Areopagus in regard to the use of classical meters in English, and were frequently experimenting themselves with hexameters from Vergil, also shows the increasing knowledge of and interest in his poetry.

It is in the poetry of the century that the change in the nature of the references and of the use of Vergilian material is most apparent. Gower and Lydgate, as we have seen, made many references to Dido and Aeneas, but they were in the main conventional, and the result of a knowledge of the romantic conception of their story rather than a scholarly acquaintance with the original. There is a certain amount of survival of this conventional attitude in the poems of the Renaissance, especially in the lyrics of the Elizabethan collections of songs and sonnets. Dido is still in many cases the forsaken woman, and Aeneas the false traitor, the type of unfaithfulness in man as Cressid is of unfaithfulness in woman, and Penelope of faithfulness

and Helen of beauty. The poets had not yet grown entirely away from this simple and obvious interpretation of the story.

On the other hand, there is a sufficient number of references which show an acquaintance with the text of the *Aeneid* at first hand. Such, for instance, is the beginning of Wyatt's unfinished *Song of Iopas*,

When Dido feasted the wand'ring Trojan knight,
Whom Juno's wrath with storms did force in Libic sands to light;
That mighty Atlas taught, the supper lasting long,
With crisped locks on golden harp Iopas sang in song,

or the same author's lines in one of his *Odes*,

For though hard rocks among
She seems to have been bred;
And of the tiger long
Been nourished and fed.

The numerous references to Nisus and Euryalus, the use of Scylla and Charybdis in imagery, the allusion in

O house without thy head!
O ship without a steare!
Thy Palynurus now is dead,
As shortly will appear,

all gathered from *Tottel's Miscellany* and its followers, are evidences of a knowledge of the entire *Aeneid*. And although Turbervile's *Pretie Epigram of a Scholer, that having read Virgils Aeneidos, maried a curst wife*, quotes only the first two words of the *Aeneid*, it may fairly be conjectured that both the author and the subject of the epigram had read further. Grimoald's sonnet *Concerning Virgils Eneids* shows by its high praise that the author was a reader and admirer of Vergil.

The second passage quoted from Sir Thomas Wyatt above, together with a similar one from the *Gallery of Gallant Inventions*,

> Yet lo, thy proofe I know, the trusty waight,
> Of Tygars milke, thou fostred wert from molde,[1]

illustrates the new method of imitation from the classics. During the Middle Ages, and up through the fifteenth century, a poet very seldom used Vergilian phraseology unless he was referring directly to the story of the *Aeneid*. He rarely adopted a line or phrase or figure and applied it to some other situation. Chaucer and his contemporaries, with mediaeval dependence on their "auctours," constantly used the name of Vergil to support their story, and frankly borrowed descriptions, such as that of Lady Fame. But after Vida had given his advice to steal boldly and continually from the classics, and especially from Vergil, and after the new education had brought to all men of letters a thorough familiarity with his work, poets began to imitate lines, paragraphs, whole passages of the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, or the *Aeneid*, with no more acknowledgment to Vergil than Vergil had made to his Greek models. Imitation became one of the cardinal principles of writing, and the poetry of the Elizabethans is filled with echoes of their reading in the classics.

The most elaborate piece of Vergilian imitation before Spenser, is Sackville's *Induction* to the 1563 edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*. The Middle Ages and humanism meet in this poem in a remarkable way. The early stanzas are full of Chaucerian echoes, with the characteristic mediaeval fondness for elaborate astronomical information and for detailed description shown in the exaggerations in the picture of Sorrow. But with the poet's recognition

[1] Cf. *Aen.* 4. 365–7.

of Sorrow as a goddess, and her proposal to conduct him to the Underworld, begins the imitation of the *Aeneid*. Like Aeneas and the Sibyl, Sackville and his guide come to "Lake Averne,"

> Which up in the ayer such stinking vapors throwes
> That over there, may flye no fowle but dyes,
> Choakt with the pestilent savours that aryse.

The cave too, "wyth ougly mouth and grisly jawes," is like that in Vergil, "vastoque immanis hiatu." At the entrance to Hell they find a number of allegorical figures, like those in Vergil, Remorse, Dread, Revenge, Miserie, Care, Sleep, Old Age, Maladie, Famine, Death, and War.[2] The mere name or the suggestive adjective of Vergil's account is elaborated by Sackville into a passage of several lines, never less than seven, and in the description of Old Age, forty-two. "Heavy slepe the cosin of death," "sad Olde age," and "pale Maladie," the Vergilian expressions, do not satisfy him; he must add to them many lines in which the repugnant characteristics of these figures are dwelt on with loving minuteness. There are other Vergilian reminiscences included in these lines, such as the echo of Evander's wish that his youth might return. The shield of War is an obvious copy of the shield of Aeneas. It is adorned with pictures of historical or legendary events, not with allegorical figures like that of Achilles. The picture of the fall of Troy was evidently written with Vergil in mind, especially the narrative of the capture of Cassandra and the death of Priam. The descriptions of Charon and of Cerberus are taken straight from the *Aeneid*, and also the account of the launching of the skiff with its corporeal burden. The lines,

[2] Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II. 7. 21 ff.

> And furth we launch ful fraughted to the brinke,
> Whan with the unwonted weyght, the rustye keele
> Began to creake as if the same should sinke,

are the Vergilian

> gemuit sub pondere cumba
> sutilis et multam accepit rimosa paludem.

And finally, the shades in the Underworld are divided into the Vergilian classes, "babes . . . maydes unwed . . . gyltles slayne . . . lovers dead."

The increased popularity of the story of the *Aeneid* was also a powerful factor in determining the nature of Vergilian influence in the century. The weight of authority on the story of Troy was gradually being transferred from Dares Phrygius to Vergil. William Warner in the last decade of the century tells the old traitor story in the body of his *Albion's England*, but appends a prose abstract of the *Aeneid* in which he casts a slur at those authorities who "noted" the hero of that poem "of disloyalty toward Priam." The two versions stood side by side for much of the time, but the balance of power was changing. "Sinon's shifts" were spoken of rather than Aeneas' disloyalty. The story of Aeneas' wanderings, his love-affair with Dido, and his battles in Italy, was becoming an old and familiar tale. And Dido's tragic love-affair was the most familiar portion of the narrative, and the most appealing, then as now. The new knowledge of her story, as it was told by the master himself, and the centuries of romantic tradition, combined to make her a favorite, as is proved by the constant references to her in poetry and the repeated use of this incident in the drama.

But perhaps the thing which is most significant of the change during the Renaissance, is the contrast between the picture drawn of the personality of Vergil himself by

John Doesborcke, somewhere around 1530, or by Stephen Hawes, and that drawn by Ben Jonson in his *Poetaster*, in 1601. There stands the solitary figure of the magician, utterly divorced, to all intents and purposes, from the time in which he lived and the literature which he produced, a figure belonging essentially to the Middle Ages. Here is the author of the *Aeneid*, represented as moving in the midst of the court society of Augustan Rome. It is true that he may represent Chapman or Shakespeare or some other of Jonson's contemporaries, but nevertheless he is brought upon the stage in company with Horace and Ovid and Maecenas, and some attempt is made to show him as he must have appeared to his contemporaries. To read first a passage from the *Virgilius*, and then one from the *Poetaster*, is to step over the gap between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. To Doesborcke Vergil is merely "a fayre and a wyse yonge man, and conynge in the scyence of negromancy aboue all men than lyuynge," having no other connection with literature save that he is a schoolmaster, and often coming into direct conflict with the Emperor. But Ben Jonson's Augustus, on hearing of the approach of Vergil, says,

> Rome's honour is at hand, then. Fetch a chair,
> And set it on our right hand; where 'tis fit
> Rome's honour and our own should ever sit,

and Horace, Gallus, and Tibullus pass judgment on him:

> *Hor.* I judge him of a rectified spirit,
> By many revolutions of discourse
> (In his bright reason's influence) refined
> From all the tartarous moods of common men;
> Bearing the nature, and similitude
> Of a right heavenly body; most severe
> In fashion and collection of himself,
> And then, as clear and confident as Jove.

Gal. And yet so chaste and tender is his ear,
In suffering any syllable to pass,
That he thinks may become the honour'd name
Of issue to his so examined self,
That all the lasting fruits of his full merit,
In his own poems, he doth still distaste,
As if his mind's piece, which he strove to paint,
Could not with fleshly pencils have her right.
Tib. . . . That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment labour'd, and distill'd
Through all the needful uses of our lives,
That could a man remember but his lines,
He should not touch at any serious point,
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.
. . . . . .
Hor. And for his poesy, 'tis so rammed with life,
That it shall gather strength of life, with being,
And live hereafter, more admired, than now.

Although the last two speeches may be intended as a criticism of Chapman or Shakespeare, it is nevertheless significant that Vergil should be the author chosen to represent a man so honored, the one to sit at Caesar's right hand, and to give judgment in a literary court. And there is little here given in the description of the Roman poet and his work that has not been or might not be considered applicable to the historic Vergil.

To the Renaissance, Vergil was the author not only of the *Aeneid*, but also of the *Eclogues*. All three of his poems were well known, but the *Georgics* did not come into their own until the eighteenth century. Nicholas Grimoald, it is true, made a paraphrase of them, which was printed in 1591, and a translation of the *Bucolics* and *Georgics* was published in 1589 by "A. F." But there was nothing in England to correspond to the French and Italian imitations by Baïf, Alamanni and Rucellai. Thomas Tusser's *Five*

Hundreth Points of Good Husbandry, the only work in the century which might seem like an imitation of the *Georgics*, evidently owes its maxims to no classical poet, but to the experience and common sense of the writer himself. The didacticism of the sixteenth century turned to other things beside agriculture.

Spenser was the greatest figure of Elizabethan poetry, outside of the drama. His range of genius, greater than that of any other poet of the century except Shakespeare, covered practically all the phases of Vergilian influence then operative, that of the *Eclogues* in particular, and also that of the *Aeneid* and of the allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid*. And his epic is an excellent illustration of the peculiar manner in which the writers of that romance-loving period adapted to their own uses an epic as formal as Vergil's poem. So, as he sums up the pastoral tradition and furnishes the models for many writers of the formal eclogue in succeeding generations, and as he is the greatest representative of the romantic treatment of the *Aeneid*, it will be well to focus our attention upon his use of Vergil, and let the practice of his contemporaries and followers illustrate and amplify the attitude which he represents.

Of the various forms of the pastoral which developed in England in the sixteenth century, the pastoral drama, the prose romance, the lyric, and the formal eclogue, it is only the last which is to be considered here. For although they were obviously all derived ultimately from the classical models, in the case of the first three, the Greek and Latin influence lost most of its individuality in being filtered through the work of the Italian, French, and Spanish writers, to whom the pastoral poets of England owed such a large debt in form and substance. Even in the formal eclogue the writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, Marot, and especially

Mantuan, introduced so many new elements that the "smooth-sliding Mincius" flows by no means clear and uncontaminated from its source. Spenser's predecessors in England, Barclay and Googe, owe more to these Renaissance models than to Vergil, although an occasional echo of a Vergilian line shows that the originator of the form is not wholly forgotten.

The Shepheardes Calender appeared anonymously in 1579, with a "glosse" written by a certain "E. K.," whose identity has caused much discussion. The elaborate commentaries which had gathered about the *Eclogues* of Vergil, explaining not only difficulties in the text but also allusions to contemporary events and persons, both actual and supposed, had set the fashion for the addition of notes to the Renaissance pastorals. Some, like Petrarch, wrote the commentaries themselves, and it has been said that "E. K." is no other than Spenser. But probably he was a friend of the poet, a certain Edward Kirke, who acted as interpreter for "Immerito." At any rate, he knew his Vergil, and pointed out many passages which showed that Spenser was definitely following his classic master. Theocritus, however, he counts as of more authority than Vergil, "this especially from that deriving, as from the first head and wel-spring, the whole invencion of his Aeglogues." He misunderstands the Latin title which was always used, and says it was from the Greek, — "Aeglogai, as it were *αἰγών*, or *αἰγονόμων λόγοι*, that is, Goteheards tales."

Spenser was familiar with the whole pastoral tradition from its Greek founders through the Latin, Italian, Spanish, and French writers, and he borrowed freely from all sources. He seems to have been original in his use of homely English names instead of the Greek or Latin conventional titles of the earlier and much of the later pastoral, and of a rustic dialect, which displeased Sidney. "That same framing

of his stile, to an old rustick language, I dare not alowe, sith neyther Theocritus in Greeke, Virgill in Latine, nor Sanazar in Italian, did affect it." Thus he wrote, forgetting that Vergil himself had been criticized for his "cuium pecus." These homely and familiar touches lend an atmosphere of reality to the themes and forms borrowed from abroad, and make the song-contest of Theocritus and Vergil, the religious and moral satire of Mantuan, and the elegy of Marot seem almost native to English soil.

Of the twelve eclogues, three are definitely modeled upon Mantuan, the *July*, the *September* and *October*, and one, the *November*, "is made in imitation of Marot his song, which he made upon the death of Loys the Frenche Queene." In this, however, the Vergilian tradition shows itself perpetuated through the French, in the change from sorrow to joy at the thought that the loved one is not really dead, but, as Vergil expresses it,

> candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
> sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera.

Although Spenser was definitely imitating Marot, he could not have failed to remember the *Daphnis* of Vergil when he wrote,

> Why wayle we then? why weary we the gods with playnts,
> As if some evill were to her betight?
> She raignes a goddesse now emong the saintes,
> That whilome was the saynt of shepheards light:
> And is enstalled nowe in heavens hight.

The eclogues that deal with the love of Colin are more classical in form. The shepherd lad who "thus him playnd" is a familiar figure in both Theocritus and Vergil. Like Vergil's Corydon, Colin will

> seeke for queene apples unripe,
> To give my Rosalind,

and like Damon he expresses his jealousy of his successful rival. It is the *August* eclogue which is the most classical in form. Like the shepherds of Sicily and of the Mantuan plains, Willye and Perigot engage in a contest in song. The "Argument" says that this is an imitation of Theocritus, but the mention of the third and seventh *Eclogues* of Vergil shows that "E. K." was not ignorant of the fact that the Roman tradition was influential here also. Willye pledges

> A mazer ywrought of the maple warre:
> Wherein is enchased many a fayre sight
> Of beres and tygres, that maken fiers warre;
> And over them spred a goodly wild vine,
> Entrailed with a wanton yvie-twine.

Perigot in his turn offers a spotted lamb, the best of his flock. They call upon Cuddie to judge the contest, but at the close he is unable to decide between them, and like Palaemon in Vergil's third *Eclogue*, he awards a prize to each. The songs themselves are not classical in form, for instead of being in answering couplets or quatrains, of equal importance, Perigot's verses take the lead, and Willye's follow as a mere refrain or "undersong." Nor does the eclogue end with the judge's decision, for Cuddie himself sings a song which Colin has composed upon the subject of his hopeless love for Rosalinde, for which Spenser had some justification in the ninth *Idyll* of Theocritus.

Spenser introduces into his pastorals not only religious satire after the pattern of his Italian models, but also personal allegory after the manner of Vergil and his followers. The name of Colin was only a thin disguise for Spenser himself, whose love-affair with Rosalinde was well known. As Cuddie says, "Who knows not Rosalend?" "Menalcas," says "E. K.," is "the name of a shephearde in Virgile; but here is meant a person unknowne and secrete, agaynst

whome he often bitterly invayeth." Hobbinol, Colin's friend and confidant, is Gabriel Harvey. This personal allusion is at its height in *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*, where Hobbinol again appears, and the Shepherd of the Ocean, Thestylis, Harpalus, Corydon, Alcyon, old Palemon, and Astrofell; Stella, "Phyllis, Charillis and sweet Amaryllis," and the various other shepherds and nymphs, can be identified with more or less certainty with the gentlemen and ladies who, with Spenser himself, owed allegiance to that

> great shepheardesse, that Cynthia hight,
> His liege, his ladie, and his lifes regent.

Perhaps the most popular of all the forms of the pastoral was the dirge, and this Spenser used, not only in the *Shepheardes Calender*, but in his *Daphnaida* and his *Astrophel*, although neither of these is in the strictly conventional classical form. The *Pastorall Aeglogue* by Lodowick Bryskett included in the collection entitled *Astrophel*, is a good example of this, with its conventional

> Phillisides is dead. O happie sprite,
> That now in heav'n with blessed soules doest bide.

Echoes of Vergil in Spenser's pastoral poems are fairly frequent. Most of those in the *Shepheardes Calender* are noted by "E. K." in his gloss. "*His clownish gyfts*," says the commentator, "imitateth Virgil's verse,

> 'Rusticus es Corydon, nec munera curat Alexis.'"

Thenot's emblem in the *April* eclogue, "O quam te memorem, virgo?" and Hobbinol's, "O dea certe," are said to have been taken from the passage in the *Aeneid* describing Aeneas' meeting with his mother, which is "most divinely set forth." He is also careful to explain the passage in the *October* eclogue which tells how the "Romish Tityrus"

left his oaten reede,
Whereon he earst had taught his flocks to feede,
And laboured lands to yield the timely eare,
And eft did sing of warres and deadly drede,
So as the heavens did quake his verse to here,

as referring to the *Aeglogues*, the *Bucoliques*, and the "divine *Aeneis*." He also mentions the lines,

For als at home I have a syre,
A stepdame eke, as whott as fyre,
That dewly adayes counts mine,

which is Menalcas' excuse for refusing to stake one of his flock in his song-contest with Damoetas:

est mihi namque domi pater, est iniusta noverca;
bisque die numerant ambo pecus, alter et haedos.

In *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*, there are two reminiscences of the familiar verses of Vergil's first *Eclogue*,

tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas,

especially marked in the lines,

The speaking woods and murmuring waters fall,
Her name Ile teach in knowen termes to frame.

But who can say whether the ever-recurring ending of the pastoral, both in Spenser's work and in that of other writers of the eclogue, is due to Vergil's

ite domum saturae, venit Hesperus, ite capellae,

or to Mantuan's

sed iam Vesper adest et sol se in nube recondens,
dum cadit, agricolis vicinos nuntiat imbres;
cogere et ad caulas pecudes convertere tempus?

In the work of the majority of those who followed Spenser in the writing of the pastoral, there is little trace of pure Vergilian influence. Their model is usually Colin and not Tityrus, and the eclogue as exemplified in Peele's *Welcome* to the Earl of Essex, in Drayton's *Shepherd's Garland*, in Basse's *Three Pastoral Eclogues* and his *Clio*, in Browne's *Shepherd's Pipe*, in Brathwaite's *Shepheards Tales*, or in Wither's *Shepherd's Hunting*, is removed by many degrees of relationship from the eclogue of Vergil. In general they keep the form of a dialogue between shepherds or a mournful soliloquy of a love-sick swain; they develope to its fullest possibilities the personal allegory or the religious satire. In this last is shown the persistence of the influence of Mantuan, especially strong in Sabie's *Pan's Pipe* and the *Eclogues* included in Lodge's *Fig for Momus*. The crowning extravagance in the use of the pastoral form for the purpose of exposing the corruption of the Church is found in Francis Quarles' *Shepheards Oracles* of 1646.

In some cases there are indications, however, that the writer was going back to the fountain-head for his inspiration. Richard Barnfield wrote his *Affectionate Shepherd* in obvious elaboration of Vergil's *Alexis*, and he joined with his love for his Roman model a genuine love for the country, further exhibited in the *Shepherd's Content*, which sets forth the advantages of a rural life. Phineas Fletcher's allegiance was divided. In his *Purple Island*, which itself has a pastoral setting, the account of the island being put into the mouth of the shepherd Thirsil, he says,

> Two shepherds most I love, with just adoring,
> That Mantuan swain, who chang'd his slender reed,
> To trumpet's martial voice, and war's loud roaring,
> From Corydon to Turnus' daring deed;
> And next our home-bred Colin sweetest firing;
> Their steps not following close, but far admiring;
> To lackey one of these, is all my pride's aspiring.

In this curious poem, the influence of Spenser is very strong, especially in the detailed descriptions of the allegorical figures of the Virtues and Vices, and of their battles for the possession of the Isle of Man. But incidental echoes of Vergil and references to him are frequent. The Roman poet is superior to his Greek models both in epic and in pastoral:

> Who has not often read Troy's twice sung fires,
> And at the second time twice better sung?
> Who has not heard the Arcadian shepherd's quires,
> Which now have gladly chang'd their native tongue;
> And sitting by slow Mincius, sport their fill,
> With sweeter voice and never-equalled skill,
> Chanting their amorous lays unto a Roman quill?

There is an echo of the close of the last *Eclogue*,

> Home then, my full fed lambs; the night comes, home apace,

or of the invocation of the *Aeneid*,

> Tell me, oh tell me then, thou holy Muse!
> Sacred Thespio! what the cause may be
> Of such despite,

or an imitation of a Vergilian simile,

> But like a mighty rock, whose unmov'd sides
> The hostile sea assaults with furious wave. . . .
> Such was this knight's undaunted constancy.[1]

Or it may be a reminiscence of the glorification of country life in the second *Georgic*, in the passage beginning,

> Thrice, oh, thrice happy shepherd's life and state.

Fletcher's *Piscatory Eclogues* show the influence of several of his predecessors. They include the love-lament and

[1] Cf. *Aen.* 10. 693–6. Also cf. Tennyson's *Will*.

song-contest of the classic poets and Spenser, and the discussion of the corruption of the clergy of Mantuan and Spenser, transferred to the atmosphere which surrounds the fisher-folk of Sannazaro. But the music of that "sweeter voice" and the "Roman quill" is still sounding in his ears, and Thelgon and Thomalin and Myrtilus, although they live by the sea and do not tend flocks upon the plains, often speak through the lips of Tityrus. Especially is this true in the seventh *Eclogue*, *The Prize*, which records a contest in song between Daphnis, the representative of the shepherds, and Thomalin, the champion of the fishermen. Their songs, *alternis versibus*, are concerned with the time-honored topics of the beauty of their sweethearts, the gifts they have brought them, the patronage of the gods, and the rival claims of certain trees favored by their mistresses or their patron deities.

A multiplicity of influences is evident also in Milton's *Lycidas*,[4] the most perfect example in English of the pastoral elegy raised to a lyrical height hitherto unattained. Here appears St. Peter, who had figured in one of Petrarch's eclogues under the name of Pamphilus, and the whole terrible indictment of the

> Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
> A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
> That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs,

is a direct inheritance from the ecclesiastical pastorals of the humanists and of Spenser and their other English imitators. The writers of religious eclogues naturally seized upon the pastoral imagery of the Messianic prophecies and the Gospels as a justfication of their use of the word *pastor* in its double sense. But Milton's inheritance was from

[4] This earlier portion of Milton's work may be discussed more profitably here than in the next chapter.

the classics as well as from the Renaissance. Theocritus and Vergil were his models in the general scheme of the elegy, in the representation of King and his friends as shepherds singing for "old Damoetas," and in the change from the minor key of mourning to the shout of triumph at the end; and it is hard to distinguish the waters of the "fountain Arethuse" from those of the "smooth-sliding Mincius.' Also who can tell whether he is thinking of his Greek or Latin model when he asks,

> Who would not sing for Lycidas?

or reproaches the Nymphs for their absence at the time of his death? Yet in the line,

> Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears,

or in the lines of *Comus*,

> Two such I saw what time the laboured ox
> In his loose traces from the furrow came,

and in the Elder Brother's greeting to the Attendant Spirit

> Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed
> The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,

there are obvious reminiscences of Vergil. And Milton has adopted the closing verse of the first *Eclogue*,

> maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae,

and expressed the thought with equal beauty and simplicity in his last lines,

> And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
> And now was dropped into the western bay.
> At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
> To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

The influence of the *Aeneid* is not so definite and clear-cut

in the Renaissance as that of the *Eclogues*. It was in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that the *Aeneid* was regarded as the typical classical epic, and used as a model for native productions. In the sixteenth century its popularity is to be traced not so much in the perpetuation of the type, as in the incidental imitations of episode and language, as in Sackville's *Induction*, the drama, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

It was really as a romance that Spenser saw the story of Aeneas, not as a model in form and style, although, as we shall see later, he endeavored to attain the requisite epic unity by plunging *in medias res*. But he practically threw the classical structure and the classical manner to the winds, and adopted those portions of the narrative which appealed to his romantic sense — the story of Polydorus, the allegorical figures at the gate of the Underworld, and the description of Lavinia's blush, with its vivid touch of color.

In the first stanzas of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser gives promise of Vergilian imitation which he did not fulfill. He was evidently conscious and wished his readers to be conscious that he, like Vergil, was passing from pastoral to epic, and that, like Vergil in Augustan Rome, he was the founder of a new type of poetry for Elizabethan England. For he begins the poem with a stanza which frankly copies the opening of the *Aeneid*, with its four disputed introductory lines.

> Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske,
> As time her taught, in lowly shephards weeds,
> Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
> For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten reeds,
> And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds;
> Whose praises having slept in silence long,
> Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
> To blazon broade emongst her learned throng;
> Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

Also in his dedicatory sonnet to Sir Francis Walsingham, he calls that knight the "Mecenas of this age," and compares himself to the "Mantuane poete."

> This lowly Muse, that learns like steps to trace,
> Flies for like aide unto your patronage.

It is not to the example of Vergil alone, however, that he appeals in the famous letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, to justify his allegorical plan. "In which," he says, "I have followed all the antique poets historicall: first Homere, who in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis; then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas; after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando; and lately Tasso dissevered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named Politice in his Godfredo." Thus not only the epics of antiquity but the romances of the Renaissance were before his mind as he planned his work. It was with an obvious effort to combine the two that he laid out the scheme of his poem. Undoubtedly the romance attracted him more strongly, with its chivalric tone, and its outward beauty of color and perhaps its greater opportunity for allegorical treatment. Indeed, he himself had said that it was his purpose to follow Ariosto, as a letter from Gabriel Harvey proves. He wrote in 1580 in reply to a letter from Spenser asking his opinion of his plan, "I am voyde of al judgement, if your *Nine Comoedies* . . . come not neerer Ariostoes comoedies . . . than that *Elvish Queene* doth to his *Orlando Furioso*, which, notwithstanding, you wil needes seeme to emulate, and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed your self in one of your last letters." And so the poem is, in

reality, a romance, with the great British hero of romance as its central figure, with all the romantic characteristics of detailed descriptions and chivalric adventures and knightly combats. The battles of the Red Crosse Knight or of Sir Guyon are not those of Achilles or Aeneas, nor are the descriptions of Una or Duessa or Britomart like the pictures which the poets of antiquity drew of Helen or Dido or Camilla or Fame. He might have had in mind the mediaeval romances of Troy and Aeneas, but not the original Greek and Latin. Neither is the movement that of a classical epic. There is a certain unity secured by linking together all the books by the appearance of the figure of Arthur, but it is not the essential unity of the story of the adventures of Odysseus or of Aeneas. The real interest of the reader is centered, not on Arthur, but on the hero of the particular book, and the point to which he looks forward is the outcome of the adventure of Sir Guyon or of Britomart, and not the end of the Prince's search for his Faerie Queene. It is possible that this would have been somewhat changed if Spenser had finished his colossal task, and had brought us at last back to the court of Gloriana; but with the materials at hand and the plan which we know he had, of representing twelve separate virtues, he never could have achieved true epic unity. His action could not have been either "one" or "entire" although it was "great."

It was clearly his desire, however, to emulate the classic epic poets in the structure of his poem, and he evidently felt that this could be done by following Horace's rule for plunging *in medias res*. This he explains in his letter to Raleigh: "For an historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh

a pleasing analysis of all." He has, however, left his account of the "thinges forepaste" too long, planning to close his poem with the explanation which the reader needs at the beginning, or at least as near the beginning as it is put by Homer or Vergil. Hence he feels the necessity of writing an introductory letter, which rather hinders than helps in "gathering the whole intention of the conceit," and does nothing toward improving the epic unity of the poem.

It is impossible therefore to say that the *Faerie Queene* is Homeric or Vergilian in structure. We have seen, however, that Spenser had the classic poets in mind, and it is natural to assume that imitations and echoes of Vergil are numerous. Any detailed discussion of this, however, would degenerate into a mere compilation of parallel passages. Their importance lies in the nature of the passages chosen for imitation. It is not burning Troy that attracts the poet, nor the funeral games of Anchises, nor the epic combat of Turnus and Aeneas, but such incidents and pictures as are suitable to his romantic story. Spenser shows his familiarity with the story of the *Aeneid* in Paridell's abstract of the narrative, though it serves only as an introduction to Britomart's reminder of the founding of Troynovant by Brute. The first elaborate reminiscence of the *Aeneid* in the *Faerie Queene* is in the adventure of the Red Crosse Knight and Fidessa with the bleeding tree. They sat down under the shadow of two trees, and the Knight, to make a garland for the lady, tried to break off a branch.

> He pluckt a bough; out of whose rift there came
> Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled down the same.
>
> Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
> Crying, "O spare with guilty hands to teare
> My tender sides in this rough rynd embard;

> But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare
> Least to you hap that happened to me heare,
> And to this wretched lady, my deare love;
> O too deare love, love bought with death too deare!"
> Astond he stood, and up his heare did hove,
> And with that suddein horror could no member move.[5]

Although the story of Fradubio was not like that of Polydorus, these are almost the very words that Aeneas heard on the shores of Thrace from the tomb of Priam's murdered son. Another equally close resemblance is that between the meeting of Belphoebe and Trompart in the forest and the encounter of Aeneas with his mother after landing in Africa. Belphoebe thus accosts Trompart,

> Hayle groome! didst not thou see a bleeding hind?

and he replies,

> O goddesse, (for such I thee take to bee;
> For nether doth thy face terrestriall shew,
> Nor voyce sound mortall) I avow to thee,
> Such wounded beast as that I did not see,
> Sith earst into this forrest wild I came.[6]

With the figures of Payne, Revenge, Despight, Treason, Hate, Feare, and the other allegorical personages which Sir Guyon saw at the entrance to "Plutoes griesly rayne," we may compare those which Aeneas saw at the mouth of Hades. Although the list is not the same, and the existence of similar figures in allegories of the type of the *Roman de la Rose* may have had some influence on Spenser here, the

[5] *Faerie Queene*, I. 2. 30 ff. Cf. *Aen.* 3. 24–48. Cf. also Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* 6. 26 ff. and Dante, *Inf.* 13. But Spenser's model, in thought and language, is evidently Vergil.

[6] *F. Q.* II. 3. 32, 33. Cf. *Aen.* 1. 314–334.

Vergilian account must surely have been in the poet's mind, especially in view of the lines,

> Whiles sad Celeno sitting in a clifte,
> A song of bale and bitter sorrow sings,

which call up an essentially Vergilian picture.[7]

The image of the eagle of Jove carrying off Ganymede, while the shepherds stand staring after him, is undoubtedly copied from Vergil, and the description of the Gulfe of Greedinesse and the Rock of Vile Reproche opposite it is reminiscent of Vergil's Scylla and Charybdis. Besides these more elaborate resemblances, there are many similarities in briefer passages, in single lines or phrases, such as the description of the gates of sleep, which are of ivory and silver, of the "snake in hidden weedes," of Belphoebe,

> Such as Diana by the sandy shore
> Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus greene,

the picture of Aetna, the comparison of the blushing cheek of a maiden to roses mixed with lilies or to ivory overlaid with vermilion, and the use of the figure of the weary team to conclude a canto of the *Faerie Queene* or a book of the *Georgics*,

> But here my wearie teeme, nigh overspent,
> Shall breathe itself awhile, after so long a went.[8]

The epic simile is put to good use by Spenser, and many of the comparisons have a true Vergilian ring. Such, for

[7] *F. Q.* II. 7. 21 ff. Cf. *Aen.* 6. 273–81 and 3. 245–6.

[8] Cf. *F. Q.* III. 11. 34 and *Aen.* 5. 252–7; *F. Q.* II. 12. 3, 4, *Aen.* 3. 420–432; *F. Q.* I. 1. 40, *Aen.* 6. 893–6; *F. Q.* I. 9. 28, II. 5. 34, *Ecl.* 3. 92; *F. Q.* II. 3. 31, *Aen.* 1. 498–9; *F. Q.* I. 11. 44, *Aen.* 3. 570 ff; *F. Q.* II. 3. 22, V. 3. 23, *Aen.* 12. 68–9; *F. Q.* IV. 5. 46, *Georg.* 2. 541 f. It is interesting to notice that the majority of the Vergilian imitations are found in the earlier books of the *Faerie Queene*.

example, is the image of the fall of an aged tree or the rush of a loosened rock down the mountainside, the comparison of Una and the morning star, the description of the flood that descends

> And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw
> A downe the streame,

the comparison of the knight to a snake that has cast its skin, and the picture of the battle of the bulls, which is a favorite with both poets.[9]

These are the choices of a romance-lover. But the romantic figure of Dido is conspicuously absent, perhaps merely by chance, perhaps because the concentrated passion of the deserted queen would be incongruous in this leisurely narrative, and we may give Spenser the credit of having been unwilling to bring her down from the heights of tragedy as Chaucer had done. But his contemporaries were not so careful.

The tragic story of Dido had been dramatized as early as the days of the Roman emperors, and had furnished the theme of Renaissance plays on the continent both in Latin and in the vernaculars, as in the work of Dolce and Jodelle. The sixteenth century in England saw the production of four versions of her passion and death. Three of these were school or university plays, two of which are not now extant. Some time between 1522 and 1531, John Ritwise, the master of St. Paul's School, "made the Tragedy of Dido out of Virgil," and with his pupils acted it on the occasion of a visit from Cardinal Wolsey. In 1564, Elizabeth stopped at Oxford, and on August 7, a play of *Dido*, in Latin hexameters, written by Edward Halliwell, a fellow of King's College, was performed in her honor. We have the word of a con-

[9] Cf. *F. Q.* I. 8. 22, *Aen.* 5. 448 f; *F. Q.* I. 11. 54, *Aen.* 12. 684 ff. *F. Q.* I. 12. 21, *Aen.* 8. 589 ff; *F. Q.* II. 11. 18, *Aen.* 2. 304 ff; *F. Q.* IV; 3. 23, *Aen.* 2. 471 ff; *F. Q.* IV. 4. 18, *Aen.* 12. 715 ff, *Georg.* 3. 219 ff.

temporary, Nicholas Robinson, that it was a "novum sed venustum et elegans." Neither of these plays has survived the lapse of time, but there is at Christ's Church a unique manuscript of a play of *Dido* by William Gager. This was produced in 1583, when Albertus Alasco, Prince Palatine of Siradia in Poland, was visiting the English Elisa, and the subject was doubtless thought very appropriate. It was a curious mixture of a pageant and a Senecan tragedy. It combined an elaborate stage setting of storm and banquet and death scene, with the characteristic Senecan rhetoric and sententiousness, the stichomythia, and the appearance of the ghost of Sichaeus. Much of the wording is taken from the *Aeneid*, but the hexameters are tortured into neo-classical iambics, and hence lose their dignity and sonorousness. Associated with Gager in the production of the play, was George Peele, who later followed Vergil rather closely in the last part of his poem, *The Tale of Troy*, from the building of the wooden horse through the adventures of Aeneas.

In 1594 was published *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage: Played by the Children of her Maiesties Chappell. Written by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nash. Gent.* This was a true romantic drama, with its touches of humor in the parts of Cupid and the Nurse, and its complication of the tragedy by introducing the love of Anna for Iarbas. The Elizabethan love of a multiplicity of deaths at the end of a play is thus satisfied, for Iarbas stabs himself at the funeral pyre of Dido and Anna then takes her own life. Also the gruesome additions to the story which Aeneas tells of the last night of Troy are evidently made to comply with the demand of the audience for horrors. Elizabethan too are the extravagantly luscious descriptions, the sentimental additions to the discussion by Aeneas, Achates, and Ascanius of the pictures of Troy on the walls of the

Temple of Juno, and such romantic touches as those in the un-Vergilian speeches of Dido and Aeneas telling of their love for each other. These lines, for instance, put into the mouth of Dido, have and could have no counterpart in Vergil:

> I'll make me bracelets of his golden hair;
> His glist'ring eyes shall be my looking-glass,
> His lips an altar, where I'll offer up
> As many kisses as the sea hath sands.

But if we leave these things out of account, the two dramatists have followed the narrative of the *Aeneid* very closely, and in many places have introduced into the dialogue what is virtually a translation of the Latin. Jupiter's prophecy to Venus, the conversation between Venus and Aeneas in the forest, Ilioneus' appeal for hospitality at Carthage, the plot of Juno to bring about the marriage, the prayer of Iarbas, the message of Mercury to Aeneas, Dido's remonstrances and her final curse, are the chief instances, but there are many brief passages which are taken straight from the *Aeneid*. In the last act, where the Vergilian influence is especially marked, Dido and Aeneas several times break into Latin hexameters. Dido's curse is a good illustration:

> And now, ye gods, that guide the starry frame,
> And order all things at your high dispose,
> Grant, though the traitors land in Italy,
> They may be still tormented with unrest;
> And from mine ashes, let a conqueror rise,
> That may revenge this treason to a queen,
> By ploughing up his countries with the sword.
> Betwixt this land and that be never league,
> *Littora littoribus contraria, fluctibus undas*
> *Imprecor; arma armis: pugnent ipsique nepotes:*
> Live false Aeneas! truest Dido dies!
> *Sic, sic juvat ire sub umbras.*

Thomas Heywood's *Iron Age* similarly makes use of Vergilian hexameters. The second act of the second part of the play represents the scene on the seashore, when Sinon's wily words induce the Trojans, in spite of Laocoön's advice, to bring the wooden horse inside the city, and also depicts the terror and confusion within the walls after the Greeks have begun their work of destruction. The ghost of Hector appears in pursuit of Aeneas, and when he is finally recognized, exhorts the future founder of the Roman race to escape from Troy. After paraphrasing the lines,

> sat patriae Priamoque datum: si Pergama dextra
> defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent,

he closes with the following Latin verses, which are copied from the *Aeneid*, with the alteration of only one word:

> Heu fuge nate Dea; teque his *pater* eripe flammis;
> Hostis habet muros, ruit alto a culmine Troia
> Sacra, suosque tibi commendat Troia penates.
> Hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere,
> Magna pererrato statues quae denique ponto.[10]

The next act carries the story on through the scenes on the last night of Troy, introducing the Cassandra-Coroebus episode and the death of Priam, all with a certain measure of imitation and paraphrase of the Vergilian account. Aeneas plays a very small part in the *Iron Age*, however, and the only references to his adventures after the fall of Troy are in Cassandra's early prophecy of the rearing of another Ilium and Ulysses' report after the Greeks have taken possession of the city,

> Aeneas, with twenty two ships well furnish'd, . . .
> Is fled to sea.

[10] Cf. *Aen.* 2. 289–95.

These plays are the only examples of any extensive use of the story of the *Aeneid* in Elizabethan drama. There are, however, many indications of a knowledge of Vergil. The Pedant in the University plays frequently quotes him together with other classical writers, and there are quotations and allusions in many of the stage plays.

The atmosphere of mediaeval romance rather than of the *Aeneid* clings round such a passage as that in the *Merchant of Venice*,

> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage,

and it is obvious that of the two great narrative poets of Rome, Ovid is far the more congenial to Shakespeare, and far more frequently imitated by him. The whole question as to whether Shakespeare knew any classic poet in the original, or whether he was depending upon translations, is a very vexed one. Without going to one extreme with Upton and Whalley, and marshalling a large number of parallel passages to prove Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of the classics, or to the other extreme with Farmer, who denied the least particle of classical information to the poet, we may steer a middle course and take Ben Jonson's "little Latin and less Greek" at its face value. As Spencer Baynes argues, if Shakespeare attended the Stratford Grammar School, where in all probability a fair training in Latin was given and the chief Roman writers of prose and poetry were read, he must have carried away with him at least a working knowledge of the Roman tongue, "little" though it might seem to Jonson's scholarly mind, and a familiarity with Vergil's great masterpiece. It may be assumed that the references to the story of the *Aeneid*, few though they

be, even the reference quoted above with its essentially romantic flavor, and the instances where Shakespeare seems to be echoing Vergilian language, are due to a first-hand knowledge of the poem, and not to a familiarity merely with Douglas' or Surrey's translation. These echoes also are few in number. Among them may be mentioned the line from the *Tempest*,

> Great Juno comes: I know her by her gait,

and the speech by Aegon in the *Comedy of Errors*, beginning,

> A heavier task could not have been imposed.

The details in the picture of the fall of Troy in the *Rape of Lucrece* are also probably taken partly from the second book of the *Aeneid* itself, especially those in the following lines:

> Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
> Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
> Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.
> . . . . . .
> At last she sees a wretched image bound,
> That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent:
> His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content;
> Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
> So mild that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.
> . . . . . .
> Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,
> To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds.

With the first of these quotations should be compared the speech quoted in the second act of *Hamlet*, from "Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter." These lines, Coleridge said, "as epic narrative, are superb," but it is easier to believe that the whole speech is a burlesque of the somewhat lurid

description of Priam's death in the second act of Marlowe's *Dido*.

To the work of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries in the drama Vergil contributes his share of references and allusions, from the time of that in *Jacke Jugeler*,

> I think he be Dares, of whom Virgil doth write,
> That would not let Entellus alone,
> But ever provoked and ever called on,
> But yet at the last he took a fall,
> And so within a while I trow I make thee shall,

to that of such echoes as those in the following lines from *Antonio and Mellida:*

> *Ant.* Both cried, "Revenge!" At which my trembling joints,
> Iced quite over with a frozed cold sweat,
> Leap'd forth the sheets. Three times I grasp'd at shades,
> And thrice, deluded by erroneous sense,
> I forc'd my thoughts make stand.

Ben Jonson's comprehensive borrowings from the classics do not fail to include Vergilian echoes. The influence of Vergil is evident, not only in the *Poetaster*, with its introduction of the poet in person upon the stage, and its rather rough translation of a portion of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, but in his other plays and masques. Lady Haughty, the head of the college in *The Silent Woman*, echoes a passage of the *Georgics* when she says, "The best of our days pass first," and in *Every Man in His Humour*, Wellbred exclaims, "Oh, Master Matthew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few, *Quos aequus amavit Jupiter*." In the *Masque of Queens* appears Fame "as Virgil describes her, at the full, her feet on the ground, and her head in the clouds," and also

> Swift-foot Camilla, Queen of Volscia.

The Hue and Cry after Cupid contains many references to Aeneas, with whom, in point of "piety, justice, prudence and all other princely virtues," says Jonson, "I confer my sovereign." In the *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* is the following line, with its Vergilian echo:

> As if whole islands had broke loose and swam;

and in the *Staple of News*, Pennyboy Junior describes the effects of his love in imagery borrowed from the eighth book of the *Aeneid:*

> My passion was clear contrary, and doubtful,
> I shook for fear, and yet I danced for joy,
> I had such motions as the sunbeams make
> Against a wall, or playing on a water,
> Or trembling vapour of a boiling pot.[11]

In his *Palladis Tamia*, Francis Meres wrote, "As *Homer* and *Virgil* among the Greeks and Latines are the chief Heroicke Poets: so *Spencer* and *Warner* be our chiefe heroicall Makers." But Warner and Drayton and Daniel, who are more nearly classical in the form of their epics, although as far as chronology goes they belong with Spenser, may be more profitably considered in the next chapter, in connection with the classical epic of Milton.

[11] Cf. *Aen.* 8. 22–25.

CHAPTER VI

MILTON AND THE CLASSICAL EPIC

It is as difficult to define the influence of Vergil on the seventeenth century as a whole, as it is to classify the literary activity of the century in general. It was a period of political unrest and upheaval and readjustment, and of literary decadence and development, a period of transition from the freedom of the "spacious days" of Queen Elizabeth to the restrictions of the pseudo-classical school. The early part of the century saw not only the continuation of Elizabethan traditions, in which the romantic license and extravagance were carried to excess, but also the classical reaction of Ben Jonson, with his formulation of the "rules" for dramatic and epic poetry, and the beginning of the classic school in meter and diction under Waller.

But amid these shifting sands, there was one bit of solid ground in which every man of letters had fastened an anchor, small or great, — the knowledge of the classics. No matter what his views might be on the subject of form, each man had been trained in the reading of the classics, and was probably a facile performer in exercises in Latin verse and prose. The grammar schools of the period aimed to give each boy a thorough education in that ancient tongue before he reached the university, and to put him through a course of discipline which was intended to produce an accomplished writer of letters, themes, verses and orations in the language of Cicero and Vergil. The mechanical apparatus for such a complete and thorough training was easily available, for grammars, lexicons and texts had multiplied during

the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and much good critical work had been done abroad. Some of the greatest names in classical scholarship belong to this period, and in Holland especially was gathered a group of scholars such as Vossius, and Daniel and Nikolaas Heinsius, whose reputation and influence were international, and who were in touch with John Selden and other English scholars.

The emphasis in the classical training of this century was placed on the practical use of Latin in writing, for it was still the language of learned men everywhere, and the only tongue sure to be universally understood. Scientific prose, like that of Bacon and Harvey and even of Newton, as late as 1687, was written in Latin, although in some cases, as in that of the *Advancement of Learning*, there was an English version as well. The Latin verse of men like Milton and Cowley was by no means a mere academic exercise, but a mode of expression universally acceptable and intelligible. It is significant of the general familiarity with Latin that Kynaston translated Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* into Latin, that it might have an international circulation.

With this dexterity in the use of Latin, and the system of translation and re-translation in the class-room by which the result was secured, there was no possibility of ignorance of the masterpieces of Roman literature. And the work of Vergil, who was called "incomparable" by Ben Jonson, the classicist, and was placed far above his Greek masters by Phineas Fletcher, the writer of moral allegory after the pattern of Spenser, and was imitated in his *Praise of Spring* by Richard Crashaw, the prince of the contrivers of conceits, could not fail to leave its mark on all the literature of the period, in one form or another. It was a period when even a band of idle young gallants knew their Vergil well enough to adopt the name of the "Tityre-tu's."

Naturally his influence on the lyric poets was compara-

tively slight. Jonson and Herrick were indebted rather to Horace and Catullus and Anacreon for form and subject-matter, although their early practice in Vergilian hexameters may well have helped to give artistic polish to their verses, and they had assimilated much Vergilian lore that showed itself in incidental allusion and reference. It is easy to find examples of this, such as Herrick's phrases, "Cynthius, pluck ye by the ear," or "a wood of darts," or Jonson's references to the voyage of Aeneas in his Epigram *On the Famous Voyage*, and *The Voyage Itself*, in which the adventure is concluded

> Sans help of Sibyl, or a golden bough.

Or there is more elaborate imitation, as in the poem of Crashaw mentioned above, or William Drummond of Hawthornden's *River of Forth Feasting*, which is full of echoes of the tone of the *Pollio*, as in the lines beginning,

> Let Mother Earth now deck'd with flowers be seen,
> And sweet-breath'd zephyrs curl the meadows green,
> Let heaven weep rubies in a crimson shower,

and of the fifth *Eclogue* in

> To virgins, flowers; to sunburnt earth, the rain;
> To mariners, fair winds amidst the main;
> Cool shades to pilgrims, whom hot glances burn,
> Are not so pleasing as thy blest return.

And Cowley, whose *Mistress* belongs with the other examples of the early seventeenth century love of conceits, and who chose for the motto of that volume, *haeret lateri lethalis arundo*, says in his poem *Sleep*,

> Let her but grant, and then will I
> Thee and thy Kinsman Death defy,

and in *The Heart Fled Again*, devotes a stanza to the story of Dido:

> Even so the gentle Tyrian Dame,
> When neither Grief nor Love prevail,
> Saw the dear object of her flame,
> Th' ingrateful Trojan hoist his sail:
> Aloud she call'd to him to stay;
> The wind bore him, and her lost words away.

The continuation of the pastoral tradition through the early portion of the century has already been spoken of, and Milton's part in it has been discussed.[1] It would be natural, in a man of Milton's comprehensive learning and thorough scholarship to find the poet who would set the standard for the imitation of Vergil. And in a sense he did, but it was a standard too far above and too far apart from the capabilities of the other minds of the period. As in his *Ode on the Nativity*, he showed himself touched by the contemporary fondness for conceits, but used them in a way that raised this juvenile poem far above those by any of his fellow-concettists, so in his use of the conventional pastoral elegy he struck a lyric note of which none of his predecessors had given even a hint. And his place at the culmination of the development of the classical epic is one at such heights above his nearest competitor, that there is no comparison in the matter of actual achievement between them. Thus he reflected three of the most important tendencies in the seventeenth century, but he was in no sense typical of them. His "soul was like a star and dwelt apart."

The early work of Milton, except for his *Lycidas*, shows little Vergilian influence. His Latin poetry is clearly Ovidian in style rather than Vergilian, and he several times

[1] Chapter V.

definitely expresses his preference for the later poet. In his first *Elegy*, writing of his own "exile," he voices the wish that Ovid had never suffered worse exile than he, in which case,

> Non tunc Ionio quicquam cessisset Homero,
> Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, Maro.

Yet he naturally has a few Vergilian echoes in his Latin, as for example in this same *Elegy*, in the sentence, "Quid sit amor nescit," and in the list of dreadful figures that sit in the cave of Murder and Treachery and the description of Rumor in the verses *In Quintum Novembris*.

On the whole, Milton's classicism is of a Greek nature rather than a Latin. The classical allusions in his minor poems are generally of Hellenic origin, and his prose shows a decided preference for the Greek. The *Georgics* is the only poem of Vergil's that is recommended in his treatise *On Education*, although it is not credible that the *Aeneid* would have had no place in his ideal system of education. But when we come to his great epic, the influence of the *Aeneid* is traceable as well as that of the *Iliad*. Before we consider in detail the Vergilian elements in *Paradise Lost*, however, we must go back nearly a century and examine the earlier epics and their relations to classical structure.

The desire to write an epic poem had been strong among the Elizabethans. As we have already seen, Spenser evidently had the feeling that he was doing for England what Vergil had done for Rome. The figure of Arthur was undoubtedly looked upon somewhat in the same light in relation to the history of Britain as the figure of Aeneas in connection with the legendary founding and the development of Rome. The fact that he was essentially a romantic figure did not deter the poets from Spenser to Blackmore from using or thinking of using him as the central hero

of an epic which was professedly based on classic models in some respects at least. He had surpassed Brutus in epic interest. Ben Jonson is reported to have said that "for a Heroik poeme, . . . ther was no such ground as King Arthur's fiction."

The historic interest had great vitality in the sixteenth century. It is shown in the large number of historical plays that were produced on the Elizabethan stage, and also in the subjects chosen by the epic poets of the last part of that century and the first part of the next. These "saurians in English literature," as Lowell called them, were answering a real demand on the part of their readers in giving them "epic poems" which would satisfy their desire to know more of their country's story and gratify their national pride. The enthusiasm which followed the defeat of the Spanish Armada perpetuated itself not only on the stage but in the productions of the printing-houses. The chronicles of Holinshed and Hall furnished the necessary information, and were popular as sources for plays and poems. The later historical work of Camden, Stow, and Sir Robert Cotton responded to the same conditions as the poems of Warner, Daniel and Drayton.

William Warner's *Albion's England* was the first of the "saurians." Meres classes him with Spenser as one of the chief heroic poets of the English, comparing him with Vergil, but there is little of the classical epic about this "continued historie of the same kingdome, from the originals of the first inhabitants thereof," beginning with Noah and the Flood, except the fact that it is in twelve books. It is interesting, however, that the account of Aeneas' treason and banishment from Troy and his arrival in Italy, finds its place in due time in Warner's leisurely narrative, at the end of the second book. But appended to the poem is "An Addition in Proese to the Second Booke of Albion's

England: Contayning a Breuiate of the true Historie of Aeneas." He does not mention Vergil's name, but gives a fairly full abstract of the *Aeneid*, omitting the sixth book entirely and expressing his belief that the story of Juno's causing the storm is "a poeticall fiction." There are some curious turns in the narrative, and he mentions Boccaccio's version of Dido's death and gives an account of Aeneas' descendants.

Samuel Daniel's *History of the Civil Wars* is the next in point of time. His model, however, is definitely the *Pharsalia*, and although his

> What fury, O what madness held thee so,
> Dear England,

goes back ultimately to the convention of Vergil's

> Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso,

it evidently depends directly on Lucan's

> Quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri
> Gentibus invisis Latium praebere cruorem!

There was an evident pretense at epic structure, but the poem is guiltless of anything approaching epic unity.

A large portion of the work of Michael Drayton was patriotic in purpose. His legends drawn from the chronicles and his *England's Heroicall Epistles* point to his interest in his country's story, even though they have no importance in an historical way. *The Barons' Wars*, completed and published in 1603, was a revision of a poem published in 1596 under the title of *Mortimeriados*, a name which indicates the epic pretensions of the poem. It begins with the proposal of the subject and the somewhat Vergilian lines,

> Me from the soft lays and tender loves doth bring,
> Of dreadful fights and horrid wars to sing,

although the reminiscence of Spenser's introductory stanzas is perhaps stronger than that of Vergil. The figure of Mischief instilling poison into the various characters of the story is doubtless due to a memory of Vergil's picture of Alecto as she visits first Amata, then Turnus, and finally the Trojans, and inspires them all with the impulses which lead to the conflict between the Trojans and the Latins. But again there is no epic structure, in spite of the promise of it in the proposal of the subject and the invocation which begin the poem. *The Poly-Olbion*, eighteen cantos of which appeared in 1612 and the remaining twelve in 1622, makes no pretense at being epic in form. It is "A Chorographical description of all the Tracts, Rivers, Mountains, Forests, and other Parts of the Renowned Isle of Great Britain, with Intermixture of the most Remarkable Stories, Antiquities, Wonders, Rarities, Pleasures, and Commodities of the same." It is a true "saurian" with nearly fifteen thousand vertebrae in its backbone, a "strange Herculean task," as its own author called it. Its chief interest to us is in its patriotic purpose and in its telling of the story of Aeneas as an introduction to the story of Brute, in a form which is dependent on Vergil, and not on the mediaeval Dares story. In this respect it shows an advance over Warner, who relegated Vergil to an appendix.

To these earlier writers of the heroic poem it would not be necessary to give so much space, if it were not true that they were the forerunners of the classical epic of Cowley and Milton, and that each one of them showed in one way or another that Vergil was in his mind, even though he did not imitate the form of the *Aeneid*. They represent, however, a kind of poetry that was slightly to one side of the main trend of the early seventeenth century. They were all comparatively unimportant, and the prominent poets of that time confined themselves largely to short poems,

lyrical, pastoral, or satirical. But about the middle of the century there came a change, and many long sustained narrative poems were produced by the leading writers. Even the satires, like Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, were cast in the form of a story. How much of this was due to the critical discussion, both in France and England, of the characteristics of the "heroic poem," it would be difficult to say. But doubtless the poets were eager to try their hand at working out the current theories. In France the epic had an even greater popularity than in England for a few years after 1650. "En 15 ans," says Lanson, "six grandes épopées paraissent, qui forment un total de 136 chants, et dont quelques-unes ont eu assez longtemps le renom de chefs-d'oeuvre. Je n'en parlerai pas," he continues, "ce sont les parties mortes et bien mortes de la litterature classiques." The names of these, *Saint Louis*, *Alaric*, *La Pucelle*, *Clovis*, *Charlemagne*, and *Childebrande*, indicate an interest in history, but Biblical subjects were also used, as in Saint-Amant's *Moyse sauvé*, Godeau's *Saint Paul*, and Coras' *Jonas*, *Josué*, *Samson*, and *David*.

After the "saurians" the epic in England branched out in two different directions. The historic background no longer attracted the epic poet. Milton dallied with the thought of an epic on the Arthurian story, but that was in his youth, before the historical fervor had abated. The two types of literature which affected the further development of the epic were the rather inharmonious ones of the French sentimental romance and the Biblical stories.

The two chief examples of the first of these classes are the *Gondibert* of Davenant and the *Pharonnida* of Chamberlayne. The former, of which less than half was completed, is prefaced by a long letter to Hobbes, and also a reply from that philosopher, containing much praise of the new poem, including the statement that "it would last as long as the

Iliad or the *Aeneid*." But it is evident that with the drama and the French romances as models in form and subject-matter, the result was necessarily far from a classical epic, and Vergil had no influence on either style or material. The same thing is true of *Pharonnida*, which was published in 1659, an excellent example of discursiveness and all that is not classical in structure.

But side by side with the love of the French romances which was characteristic of a large portion of the reading public of the seventeenth century, was the Puritan interest in the Bible. The translation of the Bible into English under James I, and the emphasis placed by the Puritans on the authority of Holy Writ, had nearly made of the English a "people of one book." Decided stress in education in both Latin and Greek was placed on patristic learning, and the Church Fathers were quoted nearly as frequently as the classics. All this naturally reacted upon the poetry of the century, and Biblical stories furnished good subjects for epics, which, unlike the romantic heroic poems, were classical in form.

Sir William Alexander began a poem, *Jonathan: an Heroicke Poeme Intended*, but did not write more than the first book. Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie* and his brother's *Locusts, or Apollyonists* are of interest to us because of their influence on Milton. Milton's best-known English predecessor in the religious epic was Abraham Cowley, who was also the most Vergilian of all the epic poets. His prose as well as his poetry shows his admiration of Vergil, "whose Foot-steps," he says in one place, "I adore." Constant allusion and quotation, often inaccurate, give evidence of his familiar knowledge of this "best poet." In his poem on the *Motto* to the *Miscellanies*, *tentanda via est*, he says,

Come my best Friends, my Books, and lead me on,

and after a welcome to the "great Stagirite" and to "learn'd Cicero," he cries,

> Welcome the Mantuan Swan, Virgil the Wise,
> Whose verse walks highest but not flies.
> Who brought green Poesie to her perfect Age;
> And made that Art which was a Rage.

And in his *Ode: Upon the occasion of a Copy of Verses of my Lord Broghill*, he definitely expresses, although in a humorous way, his reverence for Vergil above all other poets:

> Then in a rage I took
> And out at window threw
> Ovid and Horace, all the chiming crew.
> Homer himself went with them too,
> Hardly escap'd the sacred Mantuan Book.

Four books, all that were ever finished, of his *Davideis, a Sacred Poem of the Troubles of David*, were published in 1656, in a volume containing also the *Miscellanies*, the *Mistress* and the *Pindarique Odes*. In the Preface to the volume, he writes thus of the *Davideis:* "I come now to the last Part, which is *Davideis*, or an Heroical Poem of the Troubles of David; which I designed into Twelve Books; not for the Tribes sake, but after the Pattern of our Master Virgil; and intended to close all with that most Poetical and excellent Elegie of Davids on the death of Saul and Jonathan: For I had no mind to carry him quite on to his Anointing at Hebron, because it is the custom of Heroick Poets (as we see by the examples of Homer and Virgil, whom we should do ill to forsake to imitate others) never to come to the full end of their Story, but onely so near, that every one may see it." In the same Preface he explains carefully the superior advantages of sacred subjects over profane ones. "Amongst all holy and consecrated things which

the Devil ever stole and alienated from the service of the Deity, . . . there is none that he so universally, and so long usurpt, as Poetry. It is time to recover it out of the Tyrants hands, and to restore it to the Kingdom of God, who is the Father of it." In ancient times, "those mad stories of the Gods and Heroes" served the purpose of a religious stimulus to the people, for "there was no other Religion, and therefore that was better than none at all." But for the Christian, "Does not the passage of Moses and the Israelites into the Holy Land, yield incomparably more Poetical variety, then the voyages of Ulysses or Aeneas?" And so he continues through several more comparisons, finally concluding, "All the Books of the Bible are either already most admirable, and exalted pieces of Poesie, or are the best Materials in the world for it."

The poem itself gives Cowley an opportunity to display a vast amount of Biblical knowledge, and the Notes permit him to supplement this and also to add much classical lore as well. He is quite frank in his Notes about admitting his debts to Homer and Vergil, especially the latter, but indeed they are sufficiently obvious without his mention of them. The poem opens in conventional fashion, and here as elsewhere the model is evidently Vergil rather than Homer:

> I sing the Man who Judahs Scepter bore
> In that right hand which held the Crook before. . . .
> Much danger first, much toil did he sustain,
> Whilst Saul and Hell crost his strong fate in vain.

This is followed by an invocation and prayer for divine guidance, which occasions the following note: "The custom of beginning all Poems, with a Proposition of the whole work, and an Invocation of some God for his assistance to go through with it, is so solemnly and religiously ob-

served by all the ancient Poets, that though I could have found out a better way, I should not (I think) have ventured upon it. . . . The Grecians built this Portal with less state, and made but one part of these Two; in which, and almost all things else, I prefer the judgment of the Latins." Thus he is constantly appealing to the authority of the classical epics to justify his practice, as in the use of a second Invocation, the image employed to describe the swiftness and lightness of Asahel, and the catalogue of the companions of David, in the last of which he thinks that he has surpassed the ancients inasmuch as they, especially Homer, are too detailed and diffuse. He also invokes Vergil's authority for the use of half-lines, saying, "Though none of the English Poets, nor indeed of the ancient Latin, have imitated Virgil in leaving sometimes half-verses (where the sense seems to invite a man to that liberty) yet his authority alone is sufficient, especially in a thing that looks so naturally and gracefully; and I am far from their opinion, who think that Virgil himself intended to have filled up those broken Hemistiques."

The story of David's youthful adventures offers many opportunities for parallels with those of Aeneas, and Cowley takes full advantage of them. David's vision of the future history of his race is evidently reminiscent of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, and his welcome at the court of Moab is like that of Aeneas at Carthage. Like Dido, Moab says,

> Swift Fame, when her round journey she does make,
> Scorns not sometimes Us in her way to take.
> Are you the man, did that huge Gyant kill? [2]

By Moab David is entertained with a feast, where he sees the story of Lot pictured in tapestries, and where, after the

[2] Cf. *Aen.* 1. 567–8, 617.

goblet is passed around, Melchor, like Iopas, sings a lay in which

His noble verse through Natures secrets lead,

and Joab tells the king the story of David's early life. Thus Cowley manages to introduce the conventional "episode," after the same manner as Aeneas' narrative at Dido's banquet, and continues it in David's recounting of further events in his own and Saul's past history on the next day when they go to hunt. So it is obvious that not only in single lines, such as

And with proud prancings beat the putrid ground,

which Cowley tells us is "in emulation of the Virgilian Verse,

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum," [3]

but in the general structure of the poem and the episodes and descriptions in it, Cowley is taking Vergil as his model. Denham expressed the contemporary recognition of his indebtedness to the classics:

Horace's wit, and Virgil's state,
He did not steal, but emulate!
And when he would like them appear,
Their garb, but not their clothes did wear.

Cowley's *Davideis* was praised by Rymer, who had weighed *Gondibert* in the Aristotelian balance and found it wanting. And so when Addison came to criticize *Paradise Lost*,[4] he applied the test which had been used for the epic since the critics of the Renaissance had formulated the rules of Aristo-

[3] *Aen.* 8. 596.

[4] *The Spectator*, Nos. 267, 273, 279, 285, 291, 297, 303, 309, 315, 321, 327, 333, 339, 345, 351, 357, 363, 369.

tle and Horace. "I shall examine it," he said, "by the rules of epic poetry, and see whether it falls short of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid* in the beauties which are essential to that kind of writing." He finds, upon investigation, that it fulfills the requirements that the "fable" be "one, great, and entire." The unity it secures as do its great predecessors, by plunging into the midst of things, as Milton himself says in the Argument to the first book. It is complete in all its parts, having beginning, middle and end. And it is great, even in details, greater than the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*. He then considers in the prescribed manner the characters, the sentiments, and the language, and concludes, that while there are defects in the poem, as in the actions of Sin and Death and the picture of the Limbo of Vanity, which seem more like Spenser and Ariosto than Homer and Vergil, still on the whole it measures up to the classical standards. All this seems rather futile criticism to the modern lover of *Paradise Lost*, but these were the serious standards of that time by which a poem must stand or fall. And obviously Milton was guided by these classic principles, although one never feels that they were shackling his genius.

In considering the influence of the classics on Milton, this conventional epic structure must be taken into account. But there arises at once the question whether the main influence is that of Homer or Vergil. The fact that Milton was a lover of the Greeks rather than of the Romans might lead to the conclusion that the father of epic poetry was chiefly responsible; and the proposal of the subject and invocation and prayer for divine guidance and illumination, the narration of things past by means of the conversation between Raphael and Adam, the vision of the hero's descendants, the epic combats and the epic similes, are not exclusively Vergilian, except perhaps the vision of the future, which is reminiscent of Aeneas' conversation with

his father in the Underworld. But it must be remembered that for various reasons Vergil's *Aeneid* furnished the best model for the classical epic. In the first place, it was far better known than were the Homeric poems. The Englishman of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was trained in a Roman rather than a Greek atmosphere, and was able to read and appreciate the *Aeneid* more fully than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the second place, the greater artificiality of the Latin poem from the point of view of mere form, gave it a higher position as a model. It was easier to apply the "rules" to the *Aeneid* than to the *Iliad*. Its greater brevity undoubtedly made it more usable as a pattern, and the generally recognized fact that Vergil had comprehended within the limits of a single poem the plots of both the Homeric epics, commended his work to those pseudo-classic apostles of the concise. The *Aeneid* was the most perfect and most concentrated example of epic technique, and consequently critics and poets united in praising it and utilizing it. Hence it may be assumed that Milton was no exception, and that while the Homeric poems without doubt were in his mind as he planned *Paradise Lost*, and assuredly furnished a large number of images and suggestions for certain passages, it is certain that Milton depended chiefly on the *Aeneid* as the model for the structure of his epic.

But as Addison said, "I must here take notice that Milton is everywhere full of hints, and sometimes literal translations taken from the greatest of the Greek and Latin poets." And Vergil furnishes his share. The very first words that Satan speaks to Beelzebub in Hell,

> If thou beest he — but Oh how fallen! how changed
> From him!
>
> (*P. L.* 1. 84–5)

recall the words of Aeneas when he was telling of the apparition of Hector on the last night of Troy:

> ei mihi, qualis erat, quantum mutatus ab illo
> Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.
> (*Aen.* 2. 274–5)

The catalogue of the fallen angels is more like that of the warriors in the seventh *Aeneid* than like that of the ships in the second book of the *Iliad*, and the description of the building of Pandemonium certainly owes something to the account of the building of Carthage in the general spirit of the passage.[5] And there soon follows, though not directly in connection with the building of the palace, Vergil's favorite picture of the bees:

> As bees
> In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
> Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
> In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
> Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
> The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
> New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
> Their state-affairs.
> (*P. L.* 1. 768–775)[6]

Vergil's account of the occupations of the heroes in the Elysian Fields was certainly the model for Milton's description of the sports indulged in by the fallen angels. To quote only a few lines from each, Milton's

> Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
> Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
> As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;

[5] Cf. *P. L.* 1. 376–521 and *Aen.* 7. 641–817, *P. L.* 1. 670–730 and *Aen.* 1. 421–9.

[6] Cf. *Aen.* 1. 430–6 and *Georg.* 4. 149–169.

Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form. . . .
. . . Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deed, and hapless fall
By doom of battle,
(*P. L.* 2. 528–532, 546–550)

is much like Vergil's

pars in gramineis exercent membra palaestris,
contendunt ludo et fulva luctantur harena;
pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.
. . . quae gratia currum
armorumque fuit vivis, quae cura nitentis
pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.
conspicit, ecce, alios dextra laevaque per herbam
vescentis laetumque choro paeana canentis
inter odoratum lauri nemus, unde superne
plurimus Eridani per silvam volvitur amnis.
(*Aen.* 6. 642–4, 653–9)

Addison said that the description of the actions of Sin seemed more akin to the romances of Spenser and Ariosto than to the epics of Homer and Vergil, but the appearance of Sin is certainly a classical picture. She who

seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
. . . About her middle round,
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked,
(*P. L.* 2. 650–1, 653–4)

is surely Vergil's Scylla, whom he describes in almost these very words:

prima hominis facies et pulchro pectore virgo
pube tenus, postrema immani corpore pistrix
delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum.
(*Aen.* 3. 426–8 and cf. l. 432.)

The descent of Raphael was evidently described with the account of the flight of Mercury in mind, as Milton's words, "Like Maia's son he stood," would indicate.[7] Like Aeneas at the beginning of his narrative of the fall of Troy, Raphael complies with Adam's request with the prefatory remark,

> High matter thou injoin'st me, O prime of Men —
> Sad task and hard,
>
> (*P. L.* 5. 563–4) [8]

and like Aeneas, Satan passes through the midst of his hosts invisible, and finally emerges "as from a cloud." [9]

Beside these passages which are like Vergil not only in expression but in context, there are many lines and phrases that are clearly Vergilian. Such, for example, are the lines,

> Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began,

which at once recalls the familiar *plurima volvens*, and

> Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
> Ambiguous words,

Sinon's *voces ambiguas*. The

> passage broad,
> Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell,

enshrines the well-known *facilis descensus Averni*, and, *si parva licet componere magnis*,[10] the words of the Messiah to his Father,

[7] Cf. *Aen.* 1. 300–301, 4. 253–8 and *P. L.* 5. 266–277.

[8] Cf. *Aen.* 2. 3.

[9] Cf. *Aen.* 1. 411–414, 516–518, 579–581, 586–8, and *P. L.* 10. 441–452.

[10] Milton copies this line from *Georg.* 4. 176 four times, *P. L.* 2. 921–2, 6. 310–11, 10. 306, *P. R.* 4. 563–4. It is also used by Cowley, Dryden, Pope and Tickell.

Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
Mine both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will
Supreme,
(*P. L.* 10. 68–70)

are like those of Aeolus to Juno,

tuus, o regina, quid optes
explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est.
(*Aen.* 1. 76–77)

Examples might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but these are sufficient to show how strongly Vergil affected Milton's phraseology.

Paradise Regained, which is constructed rather on the "brief model" of *Job* than the "diffuse" model of the classics, shows little Vergilian influence. Its first line resembles the discarded first line of the *Aeneid:*

I, who erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind.
(*P. R.* 1. 1–3)

There is a repetition of the favorite clause,

to compare
Great things with small,
(*P. R.* 4. 563–4)

and the lines,

nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks,
(*P. R.* 4. 413–418)

combine Vergil's description of the storm, when *una Eurusque Notusque ruunt*, and of the oak to which Aeneas is compared when assailed by Anna's pleas, which

> quantum vertice ad auras
> aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
> (*Aen.* 4. 445–6)

It would be a satisfaction if there were any possibility of establishing a definite relationship between the hexameters of Vergil and the blank verse of Milton. Addison said, "Milton has copied after Homer rather than Virgil in the length of his periods, the copiousness of his phrases, and the running of his verses into one another." But Tennyson, perhaps a more sympathetic critic though hardly a greater admirer of both poets, English and Latin, spoke more than once of the similarities between their poems in sound and movement. Surely if any one could appreciate the stately harmonies of Vergil's verse, it was this

> God-gifted organ-voice of England,

and we know that their methods of workmanship were much the same, a method of laborious polishing of each line until it reached the perfection which is characteristic of the finished work of both poets. No one is so like Vergil in this particular as Milton, except perhaps Pope, and while Milton's own genius is a sufficient explanation, it is pleasant to think, with Tennyson, that it is partly because he had studied Vergil's verse.

But while Milton is so largely indebted to the classical poets for diction and form, he is quite in agreement with Cowley in thinking that the ancient pagan stories, and indeed the tales of chivalry as well, are inferior to those of the Bible as subjects for epic poetry. This belief he

expresses in unmistakable words at the beginning of the ninth book of Paradise Lost:

> I now must change
> These notes to tragic — foul distrust, and breach
> Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
> And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given.
> . . . Sad task! yet argument
> Not less but more heroic than the wrath
> Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
> Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
> Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
> Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's that so long
> Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son.
>
> (*P. L.* 9. 5–10, 13–19)

Paradise Lost stands as an example of a poem in which supreme genius has triumphed over the restrictions imposed by the conventions of the classical epic. Where genius was lacking, however, the result of an endeavor to write after the pattern of Vergil and Homer was a sad failure. This is illustrated by the four epics of Sir Richard Blackmore, a better physician, apparently, than he was a poet. In these he returned to subjects drawn from English history or legend, and called his four poems *Prince Arthur*, *King Arthur*, *Eliza*, and *Alfred*. They are most carefully worked out along the recognized epic lines, with Vergil as the model rather than Homer. But in spite of this conscientiousness in complying with the rules, they called forth a storm of criticism, although *Prince Arthur* was well liked by the class of readers who were not troubled by the relation of the author to the classics. "Of his four epic poems," wrote Johnson, "the first had such reputation and popularity as enraged the critics; the second was at least known enough

to be ridiculed; the two last had neither friends nor enemies." John Dennis was one of the critics who were enraged by the success of *Prince Arthur*, and he wrote a book of more than two hundred pages to prove that Blackmore had not succeeded, and that he had not shown the "judgment" of his model, Vergil.

Another form of verse in the seventeenth century, which pointed forward to the time of Pope and his followers, is the mock-epic or burlesque, of which the chief example is Butler's *Hudibras*. This poem has various imitations of Vergil, notably the parody of the description of Fame:

> There is a tall long-sided dame,
> (But wondrous light) ycleped Fame,
> That like a thin cameleon boards
> Herself on air, and eats her words;
> Upon her shoulders wings she wears
> Like hanging sleeves, lined through with ears,
> And eyes, and tongues, as poets list,
> Made good by deep mythologist:
> With these she through the welkin flies,
> And sometimes carries truth, oft lies. . . .
> This tattling gossip knew too well
> What mischief Hudibras befell;
> And straight the spiteful tidings bears
> Of all, to th' unkind Widow's ears.
>
> (Part II, Canto 1) [11]

And if, as has been said, Scarron's *Virgile Travesti* was the model for Butler's style, it undoubtedly furnished the suggestion for such passages as this. About the same time that the first and second parts of *Hudibras* were published, Charles Cotton issued his burlesques of the first and fourth books of the *Aeneid*, certainly under the stimulus of Scarron's work. They were printed together in 1670 under the title

[11] Cf. *Aen.* 4. 173–197.

of *Scarronides, or Virgil Travestie*, and this book went through fourteen editions by 1807, and stimulated the production of other burlesques of a similar nature, such as *Maronides* and *Cataplus* and the *Irish Hudibras*, and the *History of the Famous Love between a Fair Noble Parisian Lady and a Beautiful Young Singing-Man*. All these were definite parodies of portions of the *Aeneid*, and they undoubtedly inspired much of the imitation of Vergil in the mock-epics of the next century.

CHAPTER VII

DRYDEN AND POPE

WHEN Pope, in his *Temple of Fame*, imitated Chaucer's *Hous of Fame*, he, like his master, placed the poets of antiquity on pillars. His Vergil, however, was standing not upon a pillar "of tinned iron cleere" but on a golden column,

> On which a shrine of purest gold was rear'd;
> Finished the whole, and labour'd every part,
> With patient touches of unwearied art:
> The Mantuan there in sober triumph sate,
> Composed his posture and his looks sedate;
> On Homer still he fixed a rev'rent eye,
> Great without pride, in modest majesty.
> In living sculpture on the sides were spread
> The Latian wars, and haughty Turnus dead;
> Eliza stretched upon the fun'ral pyre,
> Aeneas bending with his aged sire:
> Troy flamed in burning gold, and o'er the throne
> "Arms and the man" in golden ciphers shone.

The first few lines of this passage explain in part the attraction which Vergil had for Pope, and emphasize the phase of his genius which commanded especial admiration in the age of Dryden and Pope. It was the "patient touches of unwearied art" which admitted him to Pope's Temple of Fame.

At no previous time had the appreciation of Vergil rested so largely upon an admiration of his style. The pseudo-classic ideals of restraint and regularity were satisfied by

the perfect finish of Vergil's hexameters, and his admirers were fain to follow the precepts of Horace and the example of

> Old Virgil who would write ten lines, they say,
> At dawn, and lavish all the golden day
> To make them wealthier in his readers' eyes.

The Renaissance advocacy of imitation of the ancients was revived with a new significance, or rather a new emphasis. Form and style were the gods which the English Augustans served, and those gods took on the semblance of Horace in the satire, the epistle, and the verse essay, and of Vergil in the pastoral, the didactic poem, and the mock-epic. Of serious epic there was comparatively little, and that little was based rather on Homer than on Vergil, although of course it was impossible for Glover and Wilkie to avoid some echoes of Vergil. Indeed, the former was said to have shown "Virgil's sober rage." Wilkie, whose *Epigoniad* did not appear until 1757, twenty years after Glover's *Leonidas*, was beginning to come under the influence of the growing preference for Greek, and the reaction from the admiration for the imitative art of Vergil.

The age was essentially Latin in its culture. The superior "fire" and "invention" of Homer might arouse admiration in the minds of some critics of Vergil, but it was a cold sort of flame when translated into heroic couplets, and the compensating merits of the Roman poet in judgment and moral purpose found plenty of defenders. The Latin character of the classical culture of the period is shown, not only in the general Roman polish of the literature, but in the great preponderance of Latin quotations in the prose, and the far more general use of the Latin authors for mottoes in the periodicals, pamphlets, and volumes and collections of poems. Horace was the greatest favorite for mottoes, as is natural in view of the greater quotability of the *Odes*

and also of the sententiousness of many of the lines in the *Satires* and *Epistles* which lend themselves to citation. But Vergil was not far behind in popularity. Of the mottoes in the *Spectator*, for instance, one hundred and thirty-nine are from Vergil, two hundred and thirty-nine from Horace, and five hundred and fifty-six from all other authors, including only a very few from the Greek.

Indeed, Vergil was a part of the air that the man of letters breathed in the pseudo-classic period, and it was practically impossible at that time for a poet or prose writer to avoid quotations and echoes of his poems, or allusions to the tale of Aeneas' adventures. Dean Swift, who could hardly be thought of as possessing a nature sympathetic with that of Vergil, uses him constantly. There is scarcely a poet whom some admirer does not call the Vergil of his age, scarcely a versifier who does not refer many times to the story of Aeneas, scarcely a traveler who does not visit Vergil's tomb and recall in verse or prose his emotions on the occasion of this sacred pilgrimage or his memories of the poet's works at Rome and other places associated with his name, scarcely a prose critic who does not use his lines again and again for illustration or adornment. Also there is scarcely a poet who does not try his hand at translating at least an *Eclogue* or a portion of a book of the *Georgics* or the *Aeneid*, and Addison, who himself had made versions of a part of the fourth *Georgic* and the story of Achaemenides, praises Dryden's *Virgil* in words which are an eloquent commentary on the literary and educational standards of the time. "The illiterate among our countrymen," he says, "may learn to judge from Dryden's *Virgil* of the most perfect epic performance." [1]

The age of classicism was a period in which translation was cultivated as one of the chief forms of poetry. During the

[1] *The Freeholder*, No. 40.

seventeenth century there had come a change in the theory of translation from Ben Jonson's advocacy of the literal version. While Chapman and Harington had urged a free translation, with an effort to reproduce the spirit rather than the letter, the translators of Vergil had before this time been fairly faithful. Gavin Douglas had prided himself upon following Vergil as closely as he could, and Surrey and Phaer had both clung quite closely to the original. But in 1656, Sir John Denham published a translation of a portion of the second book of the *Aeneid*, which he had written twenty years before, together with a brief essay expressing his ideas of what a translation should be. "I conceive it to be a vulgar error," he said, "in translating poets, to affect being a *fidus interpres*. . . . Poesie is of so subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*. . . . And therefore if Virgil must needs speak English, it were fit he should speak not only as a man of this Nation, but as a man of this Age." This new kind of translation, with its effort to walk beside an author instead of at his heels, was believed in and practised by Denham and Waller and a host of smaller poets of the new classical school, including the well-known names of Sir William Temple, Joseph Addison, the Earl of Roscommon, and Sir Charles Sedley. The first few lines of Denham's *Passion of Dido for Aeneas*, with their un-Vergilian pun, will illustrate the freedom with which these translators treated their original.

> Having at large declar'd Jove's embassy,
> Cyllenius from Aeneas straight doth fly;
> He loth to disobey the god's command,
> Nor willing to forsake this pleasant land,
> Asham'd the kind Eliza to deceive,
> But more afraid to take a solemn leave,

> He many ways his labouring thoughts revolves.
> But fear o'ercoming shame, at last resolves
> (Instructed by the god of thieves) to steal
> Himself away, and his escape conceal.[2]

All of these men, however, attempted to render only a portion of the works of Vergil into English, some confining themselves to a part of a single book of the *Georgics* or the *Aeneid*. Many of them produced poems more rightly named paraphrases than translations. Two versions of the entire works of Vergil had been made before that of Dryden, that of the Earl of Lauderdale and that of John Ogilby, which was published first in 1649, and underwent various revisions and appeared in many editions. It was "adorned with Sculptures" which, I fear, are the most interesting parts of the book.

But the hand of genius was laid to the task of translating Vergil in the last decade of the seventeenth century, and whatever may be our opinion of Dryden's *Virgil* as a translation, we must admit that it is a splendid example of the possibilities of the heroic couplet. "Lay by Virgil," he wrote in the Dedication of his *Aeneid*, ". . . when you take my version," and it is thus separately that it must be judged. "The way I have taken," he said, "is not so straight as metaphrase, nor so loose as paraphrase: some things too I have omitted, and sometimes have added of my own. . . . I have endeavored to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present age."

The critical dedications and prefaces to the various portions of the translation are important not only in being examples of the first modern prose, but also as expressing Dryden's theories of translation, which are summarized

[2] *Aen.* 4. 276–286, and cf. ll. 331–9.

in the quotation just given, and his estimate of Vergil. Of the *Pastorals* he had a high opinion, although he recognized that they were the work of a young man, and he thought that in the fourth, sixth, and eighth *Eclogues* Vergil attained "a pitch as lofty as ever he was able to reach afterwards."

In the Dedication of the *Aeneid*, he comes to the defense of Vergil against his detractors, who were many in those days of controversy not only over the relative merits of the ancients and moderns, but also over the superiority of Homer or Vergil. The French generally remained loyal to Vergil, and Voltaire, in the Appendix to his *Henriade*, said, "Homère a fait Virgile, dit-on; si cela est, c'est sans doute son plus bel ouvrage." Dryden takes up the cudgels for Vergil and argues against the criticisms of his "moral, the duration or length of time taken up in the action of the poem, and what they have to urge against the manners of his hero." He finds in the *Aeneid* both a political and a moral purpose, and in its hero the pattern of a perfect prince. Hence he is necessarily pious, for perfection begins and ends in piety, but he is also courageous "in an heroicall degree." So he continues, taking up one by one the familiar attacks upon the poem and its chief character. When he comes to the defense of Aeneas against the charge of infidelity to Dido, he gives a new turn to the question by claiming that Vergil was trying to please the Romans by disgracing the founder of the race of their enemy, Carthage, for "he shows her ungrateful to the memory of her first husband." Could the romancers of the Middle Ages have heard this, their hair would doubtless have stood on end with horror at such heresy!

In common with other critics of his time, Dryden thought that the *Georgics* were Vergil's finest work, "the best poem of the best poet," as he called them. The perfection and

finish of the versification of this poem naturally appealed to the writers of the classic school. "Virgil wrote his *Georgics*," continues Dryden, "in the full strength and vigor of his age, when his judgment was at the height, and before his fancy was declining."

Dryden wrote his translation in great haste, and had to call upon some of his friends to aid him in completing his task. Addison and Chetwood furnished the Prefaces to the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues*, and also the *Life of Virgil* and the arguments for the different books. Dryden acknowledges the assistance he got from them, and also the aid which he received from the Earl of Lauderdale's translation of the *Aeneid*, which he had seen in manuscript. It was not published, however, until after the death of its author and after the appearance of Dryden's version, when the same nobleman's translations of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* were combined with that of the *Aeneid*. As their editor claims, they are much closer to the Latin than Dryden's rendering, but they are not such good poetry.

Dryden had no false modesty in regard to his work. "I have endeavored," he says, "to follow the example of my master, and am the first Englishman, perhaps, who made it his design to copy him in his numbers, his choice of words, and his placing them for the sweetness of the sound." He goes on to speak of those of his countrymen who have translated episodes and other portions of Vergil's work with great success, naming Roscommon, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, as well as the Earl of Mulgrave, to whom the translation of the *Aeneid* is dedicated. "But it is one thing," he continues, "to take pains on a fragment, and translate it perfectly; and another thing to have the weight of a whole author on my shoulders. They who believe the burden light, let them attempt the fourth, sixth, or eighth *Pastoral;* the first or fourth *Georgic;* and amongst the *Aeneids*, the

fourth, the fifth, the seventh, the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh, or the twelfth: for in these I think I have succeeded best." And again in a note on the first *Georgic*, he says, "The poetry of this book is more sublime than any part of Virgil, if I have any taste: and if ever I have copied his majestic style, it is here." It is fair, therefore, to test Dryden's translations by passages from these books, and see whether he has succeeded or not.

Although Dryden expressed himself as willing to be judged by his work in the twelfth book, among others, he also admits that he found his work growing more difficult as he progressed. Certainly his couplets at the very end of the *Aeneid* do not begin to approach the grandeur of Vergil's hexameters. The lines describing the fall of Turnus seem forced:

> The hero measured first, with narrow view,
> The destined mark; and, rising as he threw,
> With its full swing the fatal weapon flew.
> Not with less rage the rattling thunder falls,
> Or stones from battering engines break the walls;
> Swift as a whirlwind, from an arm so strong,
> The lance drove on, and bore the death along.
> Naught could his sevenfold shield the prince avail,
> Nor aught beneath his arms the coat of mail:
> It pierced through all, and with a grisly wound
> Transfix'd his thigh, and doubled him to ground.
> With groans the Latins rend the vaulted sky:
> Woods, hills, and valleys, to the voice reply.[3]

It is also possible to find in these same books instances of Dryden's admitted elaboration of his original. It seems an inevitable characteristic of the translations of this period, and although Dryden and others attempt to justify themselves by asserting their intention to make Vergil speak

[3] *Aen.* 12. 919–929.

as he would in their country and age, such additions always give the impression of having been made to suit the exigencies of the rhyme. In the following lines, for instance, there is no need for all the information:

> And now she leads the Trojan chief along
> The lofty walls, amidst the busy throng;
> Displays the Tyrian wealth and rising town,
> Which love, without his labor, makes his own.
> This pomp she shows, to tempt her wand'ring guest;
> Her faltring tongue forbids to speak the rest.

The three lines in the Latin are quite sufficient to picture the situation, and are far more effective:

> nunc media Aenean secum per moenia ducit
> Sidoniasque ostendat opes urbemque paratam,
> incipit effari mediaque in voce resistit.[4]

But there are also passages in these chosen books that represent Dryden's work at its best. In Dido's first remonstrance with Aeneas when he plans to depart, the translator has lifted his couplets to a high level of sustained passion and the lines flow so smoothly that the couplet structure is not sufficiently obtrusive to interfere with the effect of the unity of the passage:

> See, whom you fly! am I the foe you shun?
> Now, by those holy vows so late begun,
> By this right hand (since I have nothing more
> To challenge, but the faith you gave before),
> I beg you by these tears too truly shed,
> By the new pleasures of our nuptial bed;
> If ever Dido, when you most were kind,
> Were pleasing in your eyes, or touch'd your mind;

[4] *Aen.* 4. 74–76.

By these my prayers, if prayers may yet have place,
Pity the fortunes of a falling race!
For you I have provoked a tyrant's hate,
Incens'd the Libyan and the Tyrian state;
For you alone I suffer in my fame,
Bereft of honour and exposed to shame! [5]

And while Dryden never can be Vergil, his description of the storm in the first *Georgic* may be compared without hesitation with its original. If ever he has copied his majestic style, it is here:

Oft have I seen a sudden storm arise,
From all the warring winds that sweep the skies:
The heavy harvest from the root is torn,
And whirl'd aloft the lighter stubble borne:
With such a force the flying rack is driven,
And such a winter wears the face of heaven:
And oft whole sheets descend of sluicy rain,
Suck'd by the spongy clouds from off the main:
The lofty skies at once come pouring down,
The promised crop and golden labours drown.
The dikes are filled; and with a roaring sound,
The rising rivers float the nether ground;
And rocks the bellowing voice of boiling seas rebound.
The father of the gods his glory shrouds,
Involved in tempests and a night of clouds;
And, from the middle darkness flashing out,
By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.
Earth feels the motions of her angry god,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod;
And flying beasts in forests seek abode:
Deep horror seizes every human breast;
Their pride is humbled, and their fear confessed,
While he from high his rolling thunder throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows:

[5] *Aen.* 4. 314–323.

> The rocks are from their old foundations rent;
> The winds redouble, and the rains augment:
> The waves on heaps are dashed against the shore;
> And now the woods, and now the billows roar.[6]

Dryden's translation went through a large number of editions during the eighteenth century, and its progress was attended by a crowd of satellites, versions of small portions of Vergil's works, following with more or less fidelity the work of their model. Some, like Doctor Trapp, who translated the whole of Vergil into English, "with large explanatory notes and critical observations," departed from the straight road of following Dryden, and even branched off into blank verse. Trapp, who had been since childhood a passionate admirer of him whom he called "not only a Poet, but a Philosopher, and a Divine," believed that it was the translator's duty to "draw Virgil as like as you can; to think of improving him is arrogant; and to flatter him is impossible." Therefore he criticized Dryden for being too free in his translation, saying, "When you most admire Mr. Dryden, you see the least of Virgil."

In 1753 appeared the translation of the *Aeneid* by Christopher Pitt, together with versions of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* by Joseph Warton, who also served as editor and wrote notes to the whole and essays on pastoral, didactic, and epic poetry. Although Warton criticized Dryden very severely for inaccuracies and positive errors in his translation, he did not scruple to borrow from him occasionally. He says in the preface to the book, "Mr. Pitt has borrowed about sixty lines from Mr. Dryden, and I myself about a dozen," although it is safe to say, that the diction of Warton's version of the *Eclogues* was more influenced by the phraseology of Pope's *Pastorals*. But Warton has not admitted that in

[6] *Georg.* 1. 316–334.

his discussion of epic poetry he has followed Dryden's Dedication to the *Aeneid* almost word for word for nearly a page. The translation is in heroic couplet, with all the vices, to a modern reader, of that form of verse, especially as a vehicle in which to represent Vergil's hexameters. Yet Pitt has succeeded in giving a fairly stirring rendering of several episodes, such as the fall of Troy, and at times surpasses Dryden in vigor and movement:

> Now far within, the regal rooms disclose,
> Loud and more loud, a direful scene of woes;
> The roof resounds with female shrieks and cries,
> And the shrill echo strikes the distant skies.
> The trembling matrons fly from place to place,
> And kiss the pillars with a last embrace;
> Bold Pyrrhus storms with all his father's fire;
> The barriers burst; the vanquish'd guards retire;
> The shatter'd doors the thund'ring engines ply;
> The bolts leap back; the sounding hinges fly;
> The war breaks in; loud shouts the hostile train;
> The gates are storm'd; the foremost soldiers slain:
> Through the wide courts the crowding Argives roam,
> And swarm triumphant round the regal dome.[7]

There was undoubtedly a Vergilian influence on the prose of the eighteenth century as well as upon the poetry. Addison himself may have caught some of the mellowness of the master's style, although his English is too simple and colloquial to merit Young's description of it as "a sweet Virgilian prose." He approaches more nearly the Vergilian dignity in his verse, especially in his *Cato*. Of all the eighteenth century prose writers, Burke comes closest to the Vergilian polish and perfection, and this is perhaps accounted for by the fact that he always had a "ragged Delphin Virgil" not far from his elbow. He is said to have engaged in a

[7] *Aen.* 2. 486–495.

dispute with Doctor Johnson over the relative merits of Homer and Vergil, and to have been the advocate of the Latin poet.[8] Doctor Johnson himself, although he preferred Homer, knew Vergil well, and had practically memorized the *Eclogues*.[9]

Although the actual effect of the style of a poet upon a prose writer is too intangible to be analyzed with satisfactory accuracy, the extent to which Vergil was in the minds of nearly all the writers of the period is to be seen not only in the number of allusions and quotations, but in the general tendency of the critical work to hold up his poems as models to be imitated and as standards by which the achievements of others might be judged. This tendency has already been spoken of in connection with Addison's papers on *Paradise Lost*, and John Dennis' book attacking Blackmore's *Prince Arthur*.

This latter volume is an excellent example of pseudo-classic criticism, concerned with the mechanics of the epic rather than its poetic value. Dennis discusses the same questions that engaged the attention of Dryden in his critical prefaces. Dryden, whose chief importance for us lies in his translation of Vergil, which has been discussed, had intended to write an epic poem, but he never accomplished the task. What his success would have been, we can only conjecture, but doubtless he would have observed the rules and at the same time shown something of the individuality which he displayed in his criticism, and have surpassed the efforts of men like Blackmore and Glover and Wilkie. In 1666 he had written his *Annus Mirabilis*, of which he said in the prefatory letter to Sir Robert Howard, "I have called my poem historical, not epic, though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain.

[8] See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. by G. B. Hill, vol. iii, p. 220.

[9] See Boswell's *Johnson*, ed. Hill, vol. iv, p. 252.

But since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single *Iliad* or the longest of the *Aeneids*." But although he will not call the poem epic, Vergil is his model. In the same letter, after a discussion of the relative merits of Ovid and Vergil, Ovid excelling in the "tender strokes," Vergil in his "masterly" descriptions of actions and persons, he says, "Yet before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this poem: I have followed him everywhere, I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough: my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation." To illustrate this, many a line and stanza might be quoted. The line,

> Beyond the year, and out of Heaven's high way,

for example, is Vergil's *extra anni solisque vias*, and the simile,

> So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
> And long behind his wounded volume trails,

is an imitation of the lines from the third *Georgic*, describing the wounded snake,

> cum medii nexus extremaeque agmina caudae
> solvuntur, tardosque trahit sinus ultimus orbis.
> (ll. 423–4)

Probably the most familiar passage of all is the simile of the bees, which owes much to the passages in the fourth *Georgic* and the first *Aeneid*.[10]

[10] Cf. *Aen.* 1.430–6, and *Georg.* 4.149–169.

All hands employed, the royal work grows warm;
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted lilies play;

With gluey wax some new foundation lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung;
Some armed within doors upon duty stay
Or tend the sick or educate the young.

In many other places, not only in the *Annus Mirabilis*, but also in his other poems, Dryden uses similarly close imitations of Vergil, borrowing from this "best poet," as he called him, more frequently than from any other. It is the beginning of that open and avowed imitation and adoption of passages from Vergil which is so characteristic of the pastoral and didactic poems of the next century.

While the influence of Vergil in this period seems to be in general a thing of externals, in reality it goes deeper than that, and the surface imitation of the style of the *Eclogues*, the form of the *Aeneid*, and the general plan and method of the *Georgics* is a mere outward manifestation of a real appreciation of that quality in which Vergil is supreme among classic poets, the technical perfection of his work. Pope and Thomson and their contemporaries show little trace of a conception of the spirit of Vergil, of the sense of pathos in his poetry, but this is simply saying that they were not Romanticists, and that therefore the subjective element in literature did not appeal to them.

It was a very positive advantage, however, that these neo-classic critics and poets had, of perceiving and imitating and praising that phase of Vergil's genius which has never been questioned, but which had never been fully appreciated before. They represented a distinct advance over the somewhat childlike enjoyment of the mere story which

was to be found in Chaucer and the romancers, and they paved the way for the fuller appreciation of the nineteenth century, which, while it found beside the mere perfection of style in the work of Vergil a vivid imagination and a poetic insight into human life, still continued to emphasize the beauty of his verse as the means by which he was enabled to give his message to the world.

Undoubtedly the classic school found too in the work of Vergil a certain regularizing and standardizing of poetic forms, which they welcomed especially in their reaction from the exaggerations of the Marinists. He gave them models which they could follow within the bounds of common sense, and the weight of his authority and his example added value to their work in their own eyes. Their poetry they felt was no spasmodic mushroom growth, ruled by the whims of the individual, but had its roots fixed in antiquity, and was like Vergil's own oak, which

> quantum vertice ad auras
> aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.

The couplet as Pope used it was one of the most remarkable things in the history of English poetry, and it seems quite evident that not only did he admire Vergil for the finish of his lines, but he also tried to approach the same perfection. There is no possibility of setting side by side the hexameters of Vergil and the couplets of Pope and saying, "The polish of these English lines is in imitation of these Latin verses," for the nature of the two meters is too diverse. But each is chiseled out of marble, although the tools are different, and Pope undoubtedly got his inspiration for the practice of this art from a study of the methods and results of Vergil's workmanship. It is far more probable that this came from the Latin than from the Greek, not only because Vergil was preëminent in this quality, but also

because Pope's genius, like that of others of his time, was essentially Latin. The influence of Vergil in this respect is hard to analyze, and any detailed consideration of it must consist largely in a citation of passages in which Pope has actually borrowed the phraseology of his master. The deeper significance of the attraction which Vergil exerted on the English master of form must be felt rather than seen and described.

The *Eclogues* of Vergil Pope thought the "sweetest poems in the world," and it was this sweetness of versification that he endeavored to imitate in his *Pastorals*. He felt that he had succeeded, for even late in life he regarded these early poems as the most correct and musical of his works. Many of his contemporaries agreed with him, one admirer exclaiming,

> Oh could thy Virgil from his orb look down,
> He'd view a courser that might match his own!

And Lord Lyttleton fancied the shade of Vergil addressing Pope as

> Great Bard! whose numbers I myself inspire,
> To whom I gave my own harmonious lyre.

Between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, Pope composed an epic poem, *Alcander, Prince of Rhodes*, imitating the style of all the great epic poets. But the poem suffered the fate which Vergil planned for the *Aeneid*. At sixteen, however, according to his own statement, Pope wrote his four *Pastorals*, named after the four seasons of the year, a scheme which he borrowed from some of the earlier pastoral poetry, and which perhaps furnished the chief suggestion to Thomson for his arrangement of the *Seasons*. They were not published, however, until 1709, when Jacob Tonson included them in the sixth part of the *Poetical Miscellany*, the first volumes

of which had been compiled by Dryden. Undoubtedly both the poems themselves and the *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry* which preceded them, underwent considerable revision before they appeared in print. They had circulated, however, among the literary men of the time in manuscript, and had received high praise. Walsh, in a letter to Wycherley, in April, 1705, wrote, "It is not flattery at all to say that Virgil had written nothing so good at his Age."

The Preface, or *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry*, which Walsh called "very judicious and learned," is, to the modern reader, a collection of rather trite and obvious remarks gathered from Rapin, Fontenelle, and the Preface to Dryden's *Virgil*. Of chief interest to us is Pope's statement at the close that whatever merit his own pastorals might possess "is to be attributed to some good old authors, whose works, as I had leisure to study, so I hope I have not wanted care to imitate."

That these good old authors are Theocritus, Vergil and Spenser, is sufficiently obvious. The opening lines of *Spring* are in imitation of those of Vergil's sixth *Eclogue*, and those of the three succeeding *Pastorals* follow closely the first lines of the pastorals of Spenser, Vergil and Theocritus. There is good evidence, however, that Vergil was more in the mind of Pope as he wrote these poems than his English or his Greek model. "The collection of passages imitated from the classics," Warton tells us in his edition of Pope's *Works*, "marked in the margin with the letter P. was made by the accurate and learned Mr. Bowyer the Printer, and given to Pope at his desire, as appears from the MSS. Notes of Mr. Bowyer now before me." With practically no exception, the passages so marked are from Vergil, and careful search will reveal more that Mr. Bowyer failed to find or Pope did not care to note.

The temptation to which all commentators are open,

however, is to discover parallels where none exist. They are prone to go to extremes such as moved Tennyson to complaint and Landor to ridicule. The phraseology of Vergil was so familiar to Pope that it was inevitable that he should echo it frequently. It is hardly safe, however, to assume that when he says "a secret transport touched the conscious swain," he "had in his eye," as one of his editors puts it, the line from the first book of the *Aeneid*,

> Latonae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus;
> (*Aen.* 1. 502)

or that because he says,

> But now the reeds shall hang on yonder tree,

he is thinking definitely of the verse,

> Hic arguta sacra pendebit fistula pinu.
> (*Ecl.* 7. 24)

But it is perfectly possible to point out line after line which is manifestly written with the words of Vergil in mind. Perhaps the diction of Dryden's translation of Vergil had some influence on Pope's phraseology. But everyone who has studied with any degree of care the various translations of any author, will readily admit the difficulty which two men find in discovering different words and phrases for the same passage, unless the translation be very free and far from the original.

It is an interesting fact that often the earlier version of the lines in Pope's *Pastorals* is nearer the Latin than the later form in which they appeared. Perhaps Pope's maturer judgment advised him to avoid such close imitation. A good example of this is to be found in the lines in *Summer*,

> As in the crystal spring I view my face,
> Fresh rising blushes paint the watery glass.

Originally these ran,

> Oft in the crystal spring I'd cast a view,
> And equalled Hylas if the glass be true.

This version makes far more appropriate the parallel to which the note marked "P" calls attention:

> nuper me in litore vidi,
> cum placidum ventis staret mare. non ego Daphnim
> iudice te metuam, si numquam fallit imago.
> (*Ecl.* 2. 25–27)

Spring, the first of Pope's *Pastorals*, though it opens with the lines from the sixth *Eclogue* of Vergil, is in its form an imitation of the third and seventh, especially the third. Two shepherds engage in a contest in song, calling upon another swain to decide between them. Pope's Strephon stakes a lamb, Vergil's Damoetas, a heifer; in each case the opponent offers a bowl which is described at length. Pope prided himself upon his imitation of Vergil's "quis fuit alter?" in the hesitation of his Daphnis at the word "Zodiac." In a speech copied straight from Vergil, the umpire tells the two contestants to begin and "sing by turns." They obey, and in alternate quatrains which are a patchwork of ideas and phrases, now from the third *Eclogue*, now from the seventh, they recount the praises of their sweethearts. They tell of the kind glances or inviting nods which they have received, of how they have been won to agreement with the likes and dislikes of the maidens, and of the effect which the presence or absence of the "nymphs" has upon the face of Nature. The pastoral closes with the putting of two riddles, and the inability of the judge to decide between the two singers. All these features may be found in Vergil, in a less artificial form. Pope complains that Vergil refines upon Theocritus and is inferior to him in

simplicity and propriety of style; but he himself out-Vergils Vergil in his treatment of his original.

Summer, the second *Pastoral*, is again a combination of two of Vergil's *Eclogues*, the second and the tenth. Some hints for the opening address to Dr. Garth are taken from the dedication to Pollio in the eighth *Eclogue*, and the image of the sympathy of dumb Nature with the lover's grief is found in the first lines of the same poem. But like Corydon and Gallus, Alexis sits bewailing his hopeless love till the woods answer him. He calls upon the Muses, reproaching them for their absence in lines closely imitative of that passage in the *Gallus* which has been made especially famous because of Milton's use of it. Accompanying his song on the flute which Colin bequeathed to him, as Damoetas had given his to Corydon, Alexis implores his love to come and share with him the delights of the country, reminding her, as Gallus assured his Lycoris, that

> Descending gods have found Elysium here.

He closes with the complaint that the coolness of evening brings him no relief from the scorching fire of love, but he does not follow this lament with the half-cynical remonstrance of Corydon with himself for neglecting his pastoral duties.

The original of the third *Pastoral* is given in one of the notes marked "P." It "consists of two parts, like the VIIIth of Virgil." With full realization of his dependence upon the Latin eclogue, Pope calls upon the "Mantuan nymphs" for their aid. He sings of two shepherds, Hylas and Aegon, of whom

> This mourned a faithless, that an absent, Love.

Hylas, however, is the first to sing, and his lament closes with a cry of joy, like that of the second singer in the *Pharmaceutria* of Vergil,

Ye powers, what pleasing frenzy soothes my mind!
Do lovers dream, or is my Delia kind?
She comes, my Delia comes! — now cease my lay,
And cease, ye gales, to bear my sighs away!

The return of Delia is effected, however, without any use of enchantment. Aegon is without hope, for his mistress is faithless, and his "mournful lay," with its bitter "I know thee, Love" (*nunc scio quid sit Amor*), ends with a threat of suicide like that which closes the first half of Vergil's poem. In both parts of the *Pastoral* is a refrain, similar to those in Vergil. In form, this *Pastoral* follows more closely than any of the others a single model, but its diction shows less Vergilian influence than either of the preceding.

The latter fact is true also of the fourth *Pastoral*, the *Daphne*. In general this elegy is modeled on the fifth of Vergil which is a lament for Daphnis, put into the mouths of two shepherds. Pope puts the whole song into the lips of Thyrsis, including the reassurance that Daphne still lives and

wondering mounts on high
Above the clouds, above the starry sky,

just as

candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.
(*Ecl.* 5. 56–57)

This was Pope's favorite among his *Pastorals*, but it must be said that the artificiality of the whole machinery of "Nymphs and Sylvans" and "weeping loves" with their "golden darts" seems more apparent and more offensive here than anywhere else. Possibly it is because we are forced to compare it, not only with the original in the Latin, but with the *Lycidas* of Milton as well, in which much of the same material was used.

Windsor Forest, the first part of which was written at the same time that the *Pastorals* were, and the second part in 1713, when the entire poem was published, shows, especially in the first part, many characteristics similar to those of the *Pastorals*. There is not so much imitation of Vergil here, however. Pope is indebted largely to Statius and Ovid for suggestions and passages. It is interesting to notice that he uses the first line of his *Pastorals* as the last of *Windsor Forest*, as Vergil had made the first line of his *Eclogues* the last of his *Georgics*.

Unquestionably the best known of the *Eclogues* is the *Pollio*, the poem which was partially responsible for Vergil's peculiar reputation in the Middle Ages; and the best known of Pope's pastoral poems is probably the *Messiah, A Sacred Eclogue, in Imitation of Virgil's Pollio*. This is not the place to discuss the identity of the child of Vergil's poem. It is sufficient to say that the tradition that it referred to the birth of Jesus persisted down to Pope's day and beyond it. The general theory at that time was the one which Augustine had advanced, that Vergil himself was not inspired, but was adopting the ideas of a Sibylline prophecy of Christ. "In reading several passages of the prophet Isaiah," wrote Pope in the Advertisement prefixed to the poem, "which foretell the coming of Christ and the felicities attending it, I could not but observe a remarkable parity between many of the thoughts and those in the *Pollio* of Virgil. This will not seem surprising, when we reflect that the eclogue was taken from a Sibylline prophecy on the same subject. One may judge that Virgil did not copy it line for line, but selected such ideas as best agreed with the nature of pastoral poetry, and disposed them in that manner which served most to beautify his piece. I have endeavored the same in this imitation of him, though without admitting anything of my own; since it was written with this particular

view, that the reader, by comparing the several thoughts, might see how far the images and descriptions of the Prophet are superior to those of the Poet. But as I fear I have prejudiced them by my management, I shall subjoin the passages of Isaiah, and those of Virgil, under the same disadvantage of a literal translation." In view of this, it is natural that Pope should be nearer Isaiah than Vergil in his language, and such is the case. He does introduce an appropriate passage from the fifth *Eclogue*,

> intonsi montes, ipsae iam carmina rupes,
> ipsa sonant arbusta, Deus, deus ille, Menalca!
> (*Ecl.* 5. 63–64)

But because of his express desire to make the language of Isaiah appear more beautiful than that of Vergil, he has "managed" in almost every case to elaborate upon the ideas of the prophet rather than those of the poet. For instance, he writes,

> The smiling infant in his hand shall take
> The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
> Pleased the green lustre of the scales survey,
> And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.

This is obviously an adornment of the Hebrew, "And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den," rather than of the simple Latin, "Occidet et serpens." Johnson's translation of the *Messiah* of Pope into Latin repays careful study. It is significant that it is not Vergilian, which it could scarcely avoid being if the English had been strongly colored with the language of the *Pollio*. He does use the phrase, "Priscae vestigia fraudis," and also "Qualis

rerum nascitur ordo," which have no foundation in Pope's verse, but these are due to Johnson's memory of Vergil rather than Pope's.

In the same number of *Tonson's Miscellany* in which Pope's *Pastorals* appeared, were printed the *Pastorals* of Ambrose Philips. These were imitations of Spenser rather than of the classics, and Philips, like his master, discarded classical names, and in many ways tried to avoid setting and allusions which were inappropriate to shepherd life in England, although he by no means lost sight of his Vergil. In the very passage in which he praised the song of Colin Clout, he used Vergilian lines:

> Drawn by the magick of th' enticing sound
> What troops of mute admirers flock'd around!
> The steerlings left their food, and creatures wild
> By nature formed insensibly grew mild.[11]

These poems were responsible for one of Pope's numerous literary quarrels. In the *Guardian*, No. 32, appeared a paper cast in the form of a pastoral allegory, in which the names of Theocritus, Vergil, Spenser, and Philips were given as those of the descendants of the ancient king of the shepherds. Pope, incensed at the omission of his name, and the preference shown to his rival, wrote a paper and sent it anonymously to the *Guardian* in which he ridiculed the work of Philips and exalted his own. But it was done in such a way that he appeared to be praising his rival, and the criticism was taken in good faith by Steele, who submitted it to Pope before accepting it, being unwilling to hurt his feelings. Pope affected magnanimity, and allowed it to be published, but his irony was so subtle that the majority of his readers, like Steele, missed the point.

[11] Cf. *Ecl.* 8. 2–4.

In 1714, Gay published his *Shepherd's Week*, doubtless at the instigation of Pope, with the intention of holding the simple, homely pastoral up to ridicule. The "Proeme to the Courteous Reader" announces the purpose of the poet to keep his shepherds and shepherdesses true to nature. And in spite of the ridiculous names of Cloddipole and Blouzelinda, Bumkinet and Clumsilis, and the obvious burlesque of the conventional forms and language, Gay's own poetic gift and love for nature have made of these pastorals something more delightful than a mere satire. Many of his readers thought that he was satirizing, not the eighteenth century pastoral, but Vergil himself, and there is reason for this belief, for his burlesques are nearer to the Latin than many of the serious imitations.

But the burlesques of Gay, of Shenstone, of Jago, of Walsh, of the "Right Honourable L. M. W. M.," and of the Dean of Saint Patrick's himself, clever and numerous as they were, apparently had no deterring effect on the production of Eclogues. After a comparative rest during the latter half of the seventeenth century, the form sprang up with renewed vigor and greater artificiality, but with less religious and social allegory and satire. It was such a convenient vehicle for the expression of the despair of a lover or of grief over the death of the Queen or some noble patron, that no amount of ridicule could stop it, and it finally died out only with the birth of the new love for nature which could not admit the artificiality of such an outworn form. With some exceptions, such as that of Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, even when the attempt was made to keep the characters and surroundings true to English country life, the result was absurd in its artificiality. Nearly every poet and poetaster who lived and wrote in the first thirty or forty years of the eighteenth century, tried his

hand at at least one pastoral,[12] and for the most part it is true that, as Churchill says,

> Then the rude Theocrite is ransack'd o'er,
> And courtly Maro call'd from Mincio's shore;
> Sicilian Muses o'er our mountains roam,
> Easy and free as if they were at home.

The influence of the *Aeneid* on Pope is not so definitely marked as that of the *Eclogues*. That he was familiar with it and that he made frequent use of it, is obvious, but his works display no such careful and systematic imitation of this poem as of the pastorals. In his translation of the first book of the *Thebaid* of Statius, one is tempted to find Vergilian phraseology. But it is difficult to decide in most cases whether the influence is direct or not, for Statius himself was such a close student of Vergil that his Latin is greatly affected by the language of the poet whom he so deeply reverenced. There are a few instances, however,

[12] The following is a list of the chief examples of the eighteenth century pastoral. Undoubtedly many other writers, too obscure for their works to have survived in separate form or to have been included in the standard collections of poetry, were guilty of similar efforts. This list includes only pastorals of the type of the formal eclogue, not the pastoral lyrics or ballads, whose name was also legion. Ambrose Philips, *Pastorals;* Gay, *Shepherd's Week, Eclogues;* Thomas Warton, *Five Pastoral Eclogues;* Ramsay, *Richy and Sandy;* Collins, *Persian Eclogues;* Shenstone, *Colemira, On Certain Eclogues;* Churchill, *The Prophecy of Famine;* Cunningham, *Palaemon;* Wm. Thompson, *The Magi;* Wm. Broome, *Daphnis and Lycidas, A Pastoral;* Jago, *Ardenna, The Scavengers;* John Scott, *Moral Eclogues, Amoebean Eclogues;* John Logan (?), *Damon, Menalcas and Meliboeus;* Blacklock, *A Pastoral;* Right Hon. L. M. W. M., *Six Town Eclogues;* Swift, *A Town Eclogue;* Lyttelton, *The Progress of Love, A Monody;* Prior, *A Pastoral to the Bishop of Ely;* Congreve, *The Mourning Muse of Alexis;* Fenton, *Florelio;* Pomfret, *A Pastoral Essay on the Death of Queen Mary;* Walsh, *Pastoral Eclogues, The Golden Age Restored;* Barford, *The Great Shepherd;* Wm. Mason, *Musaeus, The Dean and the Squire.*

where Pope undoubtedly had Vergil in mind. In the description of Mercury, for example, which in the original is strongly reminiscent of the *Aeneid*, the translator could not refrain from reproducing the *Maia genitum* of Vergil in "son of May," although there was nothing in Statius to justify it.

But the practice of the writers of this period was to spend more time criticizing the *Aeneid* than imitating it. Some such criticism we find in Pope's Preface to his translation of Homer, with the usual contrast between the "invention" of Homer and the "judgment" of Vergil, and the conclusion that the Greek poet is the superior in most respects. The mock epic, however, was a favorite form of writing at this time, and afforded opportunities for Vergilian imitations. The 1728 edition of the *Dunciad* began,

> Books and the man I sing, the first who brings
> The Smithfield muses to the ears of kings,

and Pope's own notes to the edition of 1729 cite many passages from Vergil as the originals of his lines.[13] Burlesque imitations of the conventions of the *Aeneid* are to be found in that "heroi-comical" poem, the *Rape of the Lock*. The second paragraph, like that of the *Aeneid*, inquires the causes of so mighty a contest:

> Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel
> A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?

and there follows the query,

> And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

[13] One of the appendices to the 1729 edition is the *Virgilius Restauratus: seu Martini Scribleri Summi Critici Castigationum in Aeneidem*. There follows a "specimen" containing a number of burlesque emendations, all in Latin.

which corresponds to the famous question in the *Aeneid*, "tantaene animis caelestibus irae?" It is needless to quote in full the passages beginning, "The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer," "O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate," "While fish in streams or birds delight in air," "But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed," "Happy! ah ten times happy," and others, each of which will call to mind the Vergilian passage which is cleverly parodied. The speech of Ariel to the sylphs is in true epic style, and might be paralleled in Vergil. The punishments which he threatens do not need the mention of Ixion to remind us of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, and the reader has probably made for himself the comparison between the hard-hearted baron and Aeneas before he reaches the couplet,

> Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
> While Anna begg'd and Dido raged in vain.

Martinus Scriblerus, the creation of Swift and his fellow club-members, realized the necessity for imitation in an epic poem, for in his *Recipe* for making such a concoction, he gives definite directions based on Vergil. "For a Tempest. Take Eurus, Zephyr, Auster and Boreas, and cast them together in one verse: add to them of rain, lightning, thunder (the loudest you can) *quantum sufficit:* mix your clouds and billows well together till they foam, and thicken your description here and there with a quicksand. Brew your tempest well in your head, before you set it a blowing." "For a Burning Town. If such a description is necessary (because it is certain there is one in Virgil) old Troy is ready burnt to your hands."

Martinus Scriblerus was later made the hero of the *Scribleriad: an Heroic Poem*, by Richard Owen Cambridge, the chief exponent and apologist of the mock-epic genre. The aim of most of the other writers of the mock-heroic poem was

satirical. Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* and Pope's *Dunciad* were the models for a whole series of satires in more or less mock-heroic form, and *Hilliads*, *Consuliads*, and *Rosciads* were the fashion for many years. Swift's *Battle of the Books*, though in prose, belongs to the same general type, and Fielding's "prose epic," *Tom Jones*, contains many a burlesque of the epic style, especially of the Homeric or Vergilian simile. On the other hand there is Gay's *Fan*, which seems more like the *Rape of the Lock*, with its graceful fun-making at the expense of society. Somerville's *Hobbinol, or the Rural Games*, and Paul Whitehead's *Gymnasiad* both contain echoes of the fifth book of the *Aeneid*, and in burlesque fashion tell of foot-races, wrestling-matches, and boxing-bouts, for which the Vergilian account furnishes the basis. Somerville's purpose was partially satirical also, for he says in his dedication to Hogarth, "In this at least let us both agree, to make Vice and Folly the Object of our Ridicule."

Cambridge, however, does not think this type of mock-epic the model to be followed. The true mock-heroic poem, he says in his mock-serious Preface, is one which has the burlesquing of the classic epics as its sole purpose. He holds up *Don Quixote* as a model example of the species, but discards the satires of Dryden and Pope because they have a divided aim. The chief requisite of a mock-epic is that it should follow the ancients as nearly as possible, and that there should be absolute propriety between the hero and the subject. His hero, Scriblerus, is an eminently proper hero for a mock-epic, because, as the readers of his *Memoirs* will remember, he was brought up on a knowledge of the classics. There will be, therefore, in the poem, many passages intended as imitations of the ancients, which none but those who are familiar with the classics will understand. With this introduction, he plunges into the story of his

hero, who is driven by "wrathful Saturn's unrelenting rage" through many dangers on land and sea. Overtaken by a sandstorm in the desert, guided by a comet like that which pointed the way for Aeneas and Anchises on their departure from Troy, he meets a band of pilgrims to whom he relates his previous adventures. These include a storm at sea, an encounter with the Acrosticks, whose leader prophesies that he and his followers will be forced to drink iron, his love-affair with the Queen of the country on whose shores he lands, which is told in great detail and with almost continual burlesque of the story of Aeneas and Dido, and the funeral games for a dead Acrostick. Not only these incidents, but also many in the succeeding history of Scriblerus, show that Cambridge is thinking chiefly of the *Aeneid* in his burlesque.

Thus the most elaborate example of this type of poetry is based largely on Vergil, and this is the main phase of the formal imitation of the *Aeneid* in this period. The bones of the epic convention, stirred by the breath of Augustan criticism, are clothed with flesh again only to don the cap and bells.

CHAPTER VIII

THOMSON AND THE DIDACTIC POETS

THE pastoral and epic traditions in the eighteenth century both furnished material for burlesque and satire, even at the very height of the popularity of these types of verse. But the followers of Thomson were of too serious a cast to make fun of themselves or of each other; and with the exception of Swift and Gay, whose *City Shower* and *Trivia* were both written long before the *Seasons* appeared, all the imitators of the *Georgics* of Vergil were in sober earnest. The didactic temper was a part of the spirit of the age in the eighteenth century, and it manifested itself, not only in these professed imitations of the *Georgics*, but in the verse essays and moral epistles which were a favorite form of poetry with Pope and his followers. Although the type developed along the lines of moral and spiritual instruction as well, the poems which embody practical instructions for the farmer, the hunter, the shepherd, or the gardener are those which owe the most to Vergil. Yet many a Preface to a poem treating of any subject from Sickness to the Pleasures of Imagination, and many a passage in such poems, acknowledged tacitly or openly that he was the source of inspiration.

James Thomson was by far the greatest and most influential poet of the group which combined rules for the countryman with descriptions of nature. His influence was felt, not only in England, but also on the continent, in France and Germany, both in descriptive poetry and in purely didactic verse. He was not the pioneer in this

field, however, for Garth's *Dispensary* had appeared in 1699 and John Philips' *Cyder* in 1706. Nor was he the most thoroughly didactic, and the precepts of many of his fellows sound more Vergilian than his descriptions. The opening of *Cyder*, the first example of the didactic poem of nature, is quite like the *Georgics*:

> What soil the apple loves, what care is due
> To orchats, timeliest when to press the fruits.

Some further lines in the same poem express the ideal of this group of poets illustrated by the practice of Vergil, an ideal which they all tried to attain, but which none but Thomson succeeded in approaching:

> Nor is it hard to beautify each month
> With files of parti-colour'd fruits, that please
> The tongue and view at once. So Maro's Muse,
> Thrice sacred Muse! commodious precepts gives
> Instructive to the swains, not wholly bent
> On what is gainful: sometimes she diverts
> From solid counsels, shows the force of love
> In savage beasts; how virgin face divine
> Attracts the helpless youth through storms and waves,
> Alone, in deep of night: then she describes
> The Scythian winter, nor disdains to sing
> How under ground the rude Riphaean race
> Mimic brisk Cyder with the brakes' product wild;
> Sloes pounded, Hips, and Servis' harshest juice.

Thus he returns to his subject, and in Miltonic blank verse, which is the almost invariable medium of these didactic poets, he endeavors to mingle poetry with precepts as his master had done. So, nearly forty years later, Akenside appeals to the same authority to justify his digressions from the subject, saying in his prefatory discussion of the design

of his poem on the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, that the author has been led "to introduce some sentiments which may perhaps be looked upon as not quite direct to the subject; but since they bear an obvious relation to it, the authority of Virgil, the faultless model of didactic poetry, will best support him in this particular."

In Lyttelton's fourteenth *Dialogue of the Dead*, that between Pope and Boileau, the French critic asks his English disciple, "Who is the poet that arrived soon after you in Elysium, whom I saw Spenser lead in and present to Virgil, as the author of a poem resembling the *Georgics*? On his head was a garland of the several kinds of flowers that blow in each season, with evergreens intermixed." And Pope gives the obvious answer, "Your description points out Thomson." Thus the friend and editor of the leader of the didactic nature poets of the eighteenth century recognized the fact that Vergil furnished the model on which the *Seasons* was formed. But it must be remembered that the garland of flowers and evergreens was largely Thomson's own. There is great danger that a discussion which pretends to treat only one side of a subject should leave a one-sided impression. While Thomson was undoubtedly Vergil's debtor in many respects, both in the general form of his work and in a large number of details, yet he differed from him in nearly as many points. His fundamental aim was to describe rather than to teach, and it is rather to some of his followers, such as Dyer and Somerville, that the term "didactic" should be applied, for it is more expressive of the purpose of their work than of that of Thomson. Not that Vergil never used description in the *Georgics* purely for its own sake, for he showed the hand of a master in such a picture as that of the garden of the *senex Corycius* or that of the life under the water in the episode of Aristaeus; nor that Thomson never taught, for he did it frequently and

with true Vergilian effect, as in the account of the precautions to be taken against the plague of locusts. But it is true that both his long descriptions and his moral reflections are foreign to the manner of Vergil. Thomson mingled imitation and originality in his work much after the fashion of his own advice to the fisherman overtaken by the heat of noon:

> There let the classic page thy fancy lead
> Through rural scenes; such as the Mantuan swain
> Paints in the matchless harmony of song;
> Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift
> Athwart imagination's vivid eye.

In the Preface to the second edition of *Winter*, which appeared in June, 1726, Thomson makes a plea for the adoption of more elevated subjects for poetry. No subject, he claims, is more elevating or more amusing than Nature, and the best poets, ancient and modern, have been happiest when at leisure to meditate and sing her works. He instances the book of *Job*, and then continues, "It was this devotion to the works of Nature that, in his *Georgics*, inspired the rural Virgil to write so inimitably; and who can forbear joining with him in this declaration of his, which has been the rapture of the ages." There follows the well-known passage from the second *Georgic*,[1] where the poet longs for the opportunity to study the processes of Nature, or at least to observe her manifestations. In this place, Thomson has made a commonplace translation of these verses, but later, in the closing lines of *Autumn*, he has given a fine paraphrase of the passage, which was evidently a favorite one with him, for it is recognizable in several other places. The lines in *Autumn*, coming as they do at the end of the last-written portion of the *Seasons*,

[1] *Georg.* 2. 475–486.

sum up his doctrine and also serve to emphasize the bond between him and Vergil:

> O Nature! all-sufficient! over all!
> Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works!
> Snatch me to heaven; thy rolling wonders there,
> World beyond world, in infinite extent,
> Profusely scattered o'er the blue immense,
> Shew me; their motions, periods and their laws,
> Give me to scan; thro' the disclosing deep
> Light my blind way: the mineral Strata there;
> Thrust, blooming, thence, the vegetable world;
> O'er that the rising system, more complex,
> Of animals; and higher still, the mind,
> The varied scene of quick-compounded thought,
> And where the mixing passions endless shift;
> These ever open to my ravish'd eye;
> A search, the flight of time can ne'er exhaust!
> But if to that unequal; if the blood,
> In sluggish streams about my heart, forbid
> That best ambition; under closing shades,
> Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
> And whisper to my dreams.

Thus both by express statement and by implication, Thomson refers to the authority of Vergil to justify his choice of subject, and again in *Spring* he says,

> Nor ye who live
> In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
> Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear;
> Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
> To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
> Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.

It would be easy and tiresome to fill many pages with parallel passages from Vergil and Thomson, some of them with little justification, the similarity often arising merely

from the likeness in subject-matter. But there are many lines which offer conclusive evidence that Thomson was writing with his eye on Vergil as well as on the object. In discussing these, it will be best to consider the four parts of the poem in the order in which they were written, rather than in the order in which they are usually printed.

In the form in which we now read *Winter*, there are more Vergilian reminiscences than in any other portion of the *Seasons*, with the possible exception of the concluding lines of *Autumn*. The picture of the ox covered with snow and of the deer buried in the drifts, the instructions to the shepherds for the care of their flocks in the cold weather, the account of the storm at sea, and above all the enumeration of the signs of approaching tempest, owe much to Vergil. The last two are worth considering in detail. The lines,

> Turns from its bottom the discoloured deep,
>
> The black night that sits immense around,
>
> . . . the mountain billows to the clouds
> In dreadful tumult swelled,

and

> . . . now the inflated wave
> Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
> Into the secret chambers of the deep,

contain all the essential features of the description of the storm in the first book of the *Aeneid*. There are to be found the corresponding lines,

> totumque a sedibus imis
> una Eurusque Notusque ruunt, (ll. 84–85)
>
> . . . ponto nox incubat atra, (l. 89)
>
> . . . fluctusque ad sidera tollit, (l. 103)

hi summo in fluctu pendent; his unda dehiscens
terram inter fluctus aperit, furit aestus harenis,
(ll. 106–107)

and again in the account of Scylla and Charybdis,

tollimur in caelum curvato gurgite, et idem
subducta ad manis imos desedimus unda.
(*Aen.* 3. 564–5)

The most interesting thing about these echoes of Vergil is that none of them appears in the early editions of *Winter*. In the texts of the two 1726 editions, the passage is almost entirely free from any suggestion of the Latin. In the 1730 edition, most of the Vergilian features are present, and that of 1744 completes the transformation by changing

The loud night, that bids the wave arise

to

The black night that sits immense around.

The same thing is true of the description of the signs of approaching storm, which is closely modeled on certain lines in the first *Georgic*. The brief passage of six lines in the 1726 edition is practically without indication of Vergilian influence. In the text of 1730, seven lines are added, four of which are distinctly Vergilian, and in 1744 the passage is expanded to thirty-five lines chiefly by the addition of what are virtually translations of the Latin. Of the following passage, all except the first line, the first part of the fourth, and a few words in the last two, are new in the 1744 text:

The stars obtuse emit a shivering ray;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
Snatch'd in short eddies, plays the wither'd leaf;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.

With broadened nostrils to the sky upturned,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
Even as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plumy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
. . . The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild wing,
The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.

The models for this may be found in the following lines from the first *Georgic:*

saepe etiam stellas vento impendente videbis
praecipitis caelo labi, noctisque per umbram
flammarum longos a tergo albescere tractus;
saepe levem paleam et frondes volitare caducas,
aut summa nantis in aqua conludere plumas.
(ll. 365–9)

. . . bucula caelum
suspiciens patulis captavit naribus auras.
(ll. 375–6)

ne nocturna quidem carpentes pensa puellae
nescivere hiemem, testa cum ardente viderent
scintillare oleum et putris concrescere fungos.
(ll. 390–2)

. . . medio celeres revolant ex aequore mergi
clamoremque ferunt ad litora, cumque marinae
in sicco ludunt fulicae, notasque paludes
deserit atque altam supra volat ardea nubem.
(ll. 361–4)

More lines might be quoted from both poems, but these are sufficient to show the fidelity with which Thomson followed Vergil.

It is significant that, according to the statement of G. C. Macaulay, as the indebtedness to Vergil increases, that to other poets decreases in the successive editions. The same critic is inclined to credit that increase to the influence of Lyttelton.[2] It is in *Winter*, too, that Vergil is placed emphatically first among the shades of the great poets. In the first edition he is hailed as

> Maro! the best of poets and of men,

and in the second as

> Maro! the glory of the poet's art,

while in the final form, the praise is softened somewhat but not lessened:

> Behold who yonder comes! in sober state,
> Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
> 'Tis Phoebus' self, or else the Mantuan swain!

Summer, which first appeared in 1727, has fewer Vergilian reminiscences than *Winter*. There is a slight echo of that favorite passage which he had already quoted in the Preface to the second edition of *Winter*, in the lines beginning,

> Thrice happy he! that on the sunless side
> Of a romantic mountain, forest-crowned,
> Beneath the whole collected shade reclines,

and it is possible that the closing apostrophe to Philosophy was suggested by this same passage. In the 1727 and 1730 texts, were some lines describing the starting of a forest fire, which were modeled upon Vergil, but these are omitted in the later editions. The long passage, however, containing the praise of Britain and the enumeration of the great

[2] *James Thomson.* (English Men of Letters) pp. 145–6.

names in her history, obviously owes much to a similar passage in the second *Georgic* in praise of Italy.[3] The likeness is rather in the general idea and purpose of the passage than in individual phrases or expressions. Both begin with a description of the fertility of the soil and the prosperity of the country, and then pass to an account of the cities with their active business life, and the harbors which give evidence of supremacy in commerce. Then follows an enumeration of the great names in the history of each country, although Thomson's list includes men of letters as well as statesmen and warriors. Each poet concludes with an address to his beloved land. As is characteristic of much of the English imitation of Latin, Thomson is more verbose than Vergil. The name of each hero is the touch of the rowel which spurs on the English Pegasus for several lines; whereas the Latin poet leaves the elaboration to his reader, adding to the proper name at most only a single epithet. The "weighty brevity" of the classic writers, which Landor so much admired, was difficult for the average Englishman to imitate.

There are a number of passages in *Spring* where Thomson is following Vergil, among them the descriptions of the battle of the bulls with the heifer standing by, of the singing of the birds at the coming of Spring, and of the nightingale robbed of her young:

> Oft when returning with her loaded bill,
> The astonished mother finds a vacant nest,
> By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns
> Robbed, to the ground the vain provision falls;
> Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping scarce
> Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade,
> Where all abandoned to despair she sings
> Her sorrows through the night; and on the bough

[3] *Georg.* 2. 136–176.

Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding woe, till wide around the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

This is an elaboration of Vergil's lines,

qualis populea maerens philomela sub umbra
amissos queritur fetus, quos durus arator
observans nido implumis detraxit; at illa
flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
integrat, et maestis late loca questibus implet.
(*Georg.* 4. 511–515)

The description of the Golden Age is a treatment of a theme so universal in all literature that it is impossible to trace it to any one model. When Thomson writes,

But now those white unblemished minutes, whence
The fabling poets took their golden age,
Are found no more amid these iron times,

he may be thinking of Horace and his longing for the *arva beata*, of Isaiah and his picture of the reign of the Prince of Peace, or of any of their numerous imitators. But when we examine the lines which were in the early editions, but were not included in those of 1744 and 1746, it is clear that Vergil is his chief though not his only model. Thomson departs here from the *Georgics*, which contain merely a suggestion for the passage, and follows the fourth *Eclogue*, many of the lines being close imitations of the Latin:

The knotted oak
Shook from his boughs the long transparent streams
Of honey, creeping through the matted grass.
Th' uncultivated thorn a ruddy shower
Of fruitage shed, on such as sat below. . . .

Nor had the spongy full-expanded fleece
Yet drunk the Tyrian dye. The stately ram
Shone through the mead, in native purple clad,
Or milder saffron; and the dancing lamb
The vivid crimson to the sun disclosed.

These are the very words of Vergil translated into the past tense, with the usual elaboration:

incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,
et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella. . . .
nec varios discet mentiri lana colores,
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti
murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto;
sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.
(*Ecl.* 4. 29–30, 42–45)

It would be interesting to know what caused Thomson to discard Vergilian echoes here and add them in the later editions of *Winter*.

Perhaps the answer is to be found in a passage in *Autumn*. Here he follows Vergil's description of the rise of the various arts as it is given in the first *Georgic*,[4] when the Roman poet, instead of lamenting the advent of agriculture and commerce as he had in the fourth *Eclogue*, regards all the difficulties placed in the way of man as blessings given by Jove which might enable mortals to climb upward in the scale of civilization:

pater ipse colendi
haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
movit agros curis acuens mortalia corda,
nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.

Both poets, on maturer thought, seem to have rejected the image of the idleness and luxury of the Golden Age, and to

[4] *Georg.* 1. 118–159.

have sung the song of labor. Perhaps Thomson felt the stories of the Golden Age to be what he called them in the 1728 edition, "gaudy fables," unsuitable for a "Genius fired with the charms of Truth and of Nature." In this account of the progress of civilization, he is in accord too with the theories of modern scientists and of that strangely modern ancient, Lucretius.

Vergil's description of a torrent of rain in the first *Georgic*[5] furnished the model for Thomson's harvest storm, as it did for Swift's *City Shower*. The simile in the second book of the *Aeneid*,[6] in which Aeneas compares himself as he stands upon his housetop and watches the flames sweep nearer, to a shepherd gazing from a rock at the onrush of a mountain-torrent flooding the fields, was the basis of the following lines:

> Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
> Helpless beholds the miserable wreck
> Driving along; his drowning ox at once
> Descending, with his labours scattered round
> He sees,

of which the last lines are close to the Vergilian

> . . . sternit sata laeta boumque labores.

I have already quoted the closing lines of *Autumn*, and shown their relation to a passage in the second *Georgic*. But the similarity begins many lines back of this. In the first place, in order to introduce the lines on Stowe in the 1744 edition, a passage was incorporated which had been originally in the early editions of *Winter*, beginning,

> Oh! bear me then to vast embowering shades.

About two hundred lines later, Thomson begins his praise

[5] *Georg.* 1. 311–334. [6] *Aen.* 2. 304–308.

of country life, which continues throughout the passage quoted above to the end of the poem. It begins,

> Oh knew he but his happiness, of men
> The happiest he! who far from public rage
> Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
> Drinks the pure pleasure of the rural life.

This again, like the Golden Age, is a favorite theme with many poets, but none has given it perhaps such full expression as Vergil in the lines [7] which serve as a model for those of Thomson:

> O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
> agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis
> fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.

It is not only the similarity in phraseology in these two passages, of which many examples might be quoted, but the general harmony of thought and feeling between them which marks the influence of Vergil upon Thomson. There are many other things which show the kinship of the two poets, as their common delight in sounding names, the frequent allusions to Vergil in Thomson's letters and in his other poems, and the emotion which his reading of the Latin aroused in him. But nothing marks it so definitely as this passage, which reveals their common "devotion to the works of Nature," which Thomson recognized as the inspiration of the *Georgics*, and their common belief in a Deity who

> pervades
> Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.[8]

As is evident from the passages quoted above, Thomson shows in his relation to Vergil the sympathy of one great poet of nature for another, and manifests his influence

[7] *Georg.* 2. 458 ff. [8] Cf. *Georg.* 4. 219–227 and *Aen.* 6. 724–7.

in single passages and general tone, rather than in the scheme or purpose of his work. Thomson's followers, however, seized upon the didactic element of his poem, and taking the hint partly from him and partly from Vergil himself, they developed that side of Thomson's work through all the extremes of tediousness and absurdity. James Grainger, the author of the *Sugar Cane*, "a West India Georgic" in four books, the favorite number, since it had been chosen by both Vergil and Thomson, calls the roll of the chief didactic poets:

> Spirit of Inspiration, that didst lead
> Th' Ascraean poet to the sacred mount,
> And taught'st him all the precepts of the swain;
> Descend from Heaven, and guide my trembling steps
> To Fame's eternal dome, where Maro reigns;
> Where pastoral Dyer,[9] where Pomona's bard,
> And Smart [10] and Somervile [11] in varying strains,
> Their sylvan lore convey.

To this list, however, we must add the names of John Armstrong, who wrote on the *Art of Preserving Health*, and of William Thompson, whose subject was *Sickness;* of David Mallet, whose Fancy took flight over the whole world in his *Excursion*, and of Mark Akenside, the commemorator of the *Pleasures of Imagination;* of Thomas Tickell, who wrote a fragment of a poem on *Hunting*, of Robert Dodsley, the author of a poem called *Agriculture*, of Matthew Green, whose subject was the *Spleen*, of Soame Jenyns, who gave instructions in verse on the *Art of Dancing*, and finally of William Mason, in whose *English Garden*, one of the best of the descendants of the *Seasons*, didactic poetry, according to Warton, "is brought to perfection, by the happy com-

[9] Dyer wrote *The Fleece*.

[10] Christopher Smart wrote *The Hop-Garden*.

[11] Somerville's poem was *The Chase*.

bination of judicious precepts, with the most elegant ornaments of language and poetry." Nor must we forget Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*, the second part of which, the *Loves of the Plants*, moved the editors of the *Anti-Jacobin* to unholy mirth and clever parody in the *Loves of the Triangles*. Many of these well-intentioned poets thought that they were supplying a deficiency in the works of Vergil. Somerville, for instance, remarks that the subject of the *Chase* might well have been treated in the third *Georgic*, but that Vergil devotes only ten verses to it, and confines his discussion of dogs to greyhounds and mastiffs. And by the time we have worked our way through these wearisome wastes, we are ready to apply Mason's query to the whole school, and to sympathize with him when he says,

> Yet, while I thus exult, my weak tongue feels
> Its ineffectual powers, and seeks in vain
> That force of ancient phrase which, speaking, paints,
> And is the thing it sings. Ah Virgil! why,
> By thee neglected,[12] was this loveliest theme
> Left to the grating voice of modern reed?
> Why not array it with the splendid robe
> Of thy rich diction, and consign the charge
> To Fame, thy hand-maid, whose immortal plume
> Had borne its praise beyond the bounds of Time?

Cowper in *The Task* shows to some extent the influence of Thomson and his followers. He is continuing the combination of didactic and rural poetry which appears even in Wordsworth, although both poets are more concerned with drawing moral and religious lessons from Nature than with giving practical directions to the rustic. This is especially true of the author of the *Prelude*. In *The Garden* Cowper gives in true Vergilian fashion instructions for the

[12] See *Georg.* 4. 147–8.

growth of "no sordid fare, a cucumber," for which the gardener must build a hotbed.

> First he bids spread
> Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
> The ascending damps, then leisurely impose,
> And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
> From the full fork, the saturated straw.

Another passage tells of the care necessary for flowers in a greenhouse:

> The soil must be renew'd, which, often wash'd,
> Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
> And disappoints the roots: the slender roots
> Close interwoven where they meet the vase
> Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
> Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
> Must be detach'd, and, where it strews the floor,
> Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
> Contagion, and disseminating death.

Lines like these have the true didactic sound, and may well have been written under the influence of either Vergil or Thomson. That the *Georgics* were not far from Cowper's mind as he wrote the *Task* is evident from the comparison drawn from the fourth *Georgic* to aid in describing the Russian palace of ice:

> In such a palace Aristaeus found
> Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
> Of his lost Bees to her maternal ear.

And Vergil's familiar lines,

> O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
> agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis
> fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus,
>
> (*Georg.* 2. 458–60)

may have found an echo in Cowper's wish:

> O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
> Of unsuccessful or successful war,
> Might never reach me more.

CHAPTER IX

LANDOR AND THE ROMANTICISTS

THE study of Latin has until recent years kept the noiseless tenor of its way, for the most part unshaken by the various changes in educational theory or literary practice. Throughout the centuries it has remained steadily the basis of culture in England, and until recently its value and necessity have not been questioned. But at certain times, notably in the first half of the sixteenth century and in the Romantic Period, there has been a sudden growth of an interest in Greek literature which for the time has thrown Latin into the background. But even then, although it has not led the spectacular life of its elder sister, it has quietly held its own, and, like Cinderella, done the daily chores that the more brilliant sister might go out into society. And there was always the possibility of a visit from the Fairy Godmother, by means of whose enchantments the beauty of the drudge might be shown to the world.

Such a period of comparative neglect of Latin was ushered in with the Romantic Movement in England. About the middle of the eighteenth century, at the beginning of the revolt against rules and formalism and imitative poetry, the spontaneous graces of the Greeks won more admirers than the regular art of the Romans. Cowper's favorite poet was Homer and not Vergil, and Wilkie followed the Greek model in his *Epigoniad*, and attacked Vergil on the ground of plagiarism. In his *Dream* he says to Homer,

> Let Tityrus himself produce his store,
> Take what is thine, but little will remain:
> Little I wot, and that indebted sore
> To Ascra's bard, and Arethusa's swain;
> And others too beside, who lent him many a strain.

This attack by Wilkie, however, is extreme. For the most part, writers merely ignored the Latin poet in favor of the Greek. Gray and his friend Mason, Collins and Cowper, Coleridge [1] with his training under the Reverend James Bowyer, all showed their preferences for the earlier literature. The later Romanticists also preferred the Greek, and their interest in Hellenic literature and art was fostered by their intense enthusiasm for the brave struggle that the modern Greeks were making for liberty and independence. These facts explain the scarcity of references to Vergil or imitations of his poems in the work of men like Byron and Shelley.[2] All these poets knew Vergil, but he did not find a prominent place in their poetry.

Many years before the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, the formal classical epic had gone out of fashion, and men had gradually ceased to care for the polished brilliancy of the mock-heroic. They were beginning to think with Fielding that nothing could be more absurd than the invocation of a muse by a modern. The time had gone by, too, for sober didactic poems, with elaborate digressions on the beauties of Nature expressed in stilted and laborious blank verse, even though the *Seasons* retained its popularity well into the middle of the century. The *Loves of the Triangles* was an effective *reductio ad absurdum* for the average examples of this type of versifying. There was of course no sudden or final revolt against the mock-epic of Pope or the didactic poem of Thomson. *The Rape of the Lock* was

[1] See his *Biographia Literaria* (Everyman's Library), p. 3. Coleridge once said, "If you take from Virgil his diction and meter, what do you leave him?" *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by H. N. C., p. 30.

[2] See *Prometheus Unbound*, II. 2. 90 ff., where there is a reference to Vergil's sixth *Eclogue*, and *Hellas*, ll. 1060 ff., with an echo, admitted by Shelley, of the *Pollio*. Also see Keats, *Ode to Apollo*, stanza 3. Shelley translated part of the tenth *Eclogue*.

still admired, and the *Dunciad* furnished Byron with a model for his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* Rogers' didactic poem, *The Pleasures of Memory*, appeared in the last decade of the eighteenth century. But in general the movement of the Romanticists was away from the formal and the imitative. The new nature poets had no use for the artificial pastoral, and objected as much to the meaningless generalities of the diction of Pope and his contemporaries as to their transplanted nymphs and shepherds. Some of the earlier Romanticists endeavored to make Vergil argue on their side of the question, and plead for a true love of nature. Joseph Warton, for instance, in his *Enthusiast*, writes,

> And great Aeneas gazed with more delight
> On the rough mountains shagged with horrid shades, . . .
> Than if he enter'd the high Capitol
> On golden columns rear'd, a conquered world
> Exhausted, to enrich its stately head.
> More pleased he slept in poor Evander's cot,
> On shaggy skins, lull'd by sweet nightingales,
> Than if a Nero, in an age refined,
> Beneath a gorgeous canopy had plac'd
> His royal guest.

But on the whole, the attitude was that of Crabbe, the realist, who rebelled against the classical pastoral in these words:

> On Mincio's bank, in Caesar's bounteous reign,
> If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
> Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
> Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
> From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
> Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way? [3]

[3] *The Village*, published in 1783.

In view of these facts, it is obvious that if we are to find Vergilian influence at this time when the individual was so important, it will be, not in any school, like the pastoral or the didactic poets, but in individual writers, whose inevitable early training in the classics has left with them a memory of Vergil which other interests cannot efface, and which is too precious to abandon. It will be in a Beattie, who writes,

> Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
> What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,
> When the great shepherd of the Mantuan plains
> His deep majestic melody 'gan roll.

It will be in a single poem like *Laodamia*, which Wordsworth wrote after re-reading Vergil with his son. It will be in a Cowper, who, in spite of the fact that he liked the Homeric epics better than the *Aeneid*, was

> never weary of the pipe
> Of Tityrus, assembling as he sang,
> The rustic throng beneath his fav'rite beech.

And most of all it will be in a Landor, the greatest classicist of the period among the men of letters, as Swinburne called him, "a child of Rome."

Landor's pleasure in the classics never flagged; he read and studied them throughout his life from his schooldays to the last years in Italy, when he found a relief from his troubles in teaching Latin to Miss Kate Field, his young American friend. The first direct evidence of his interest in Vergil is to be found in a translation of a portion of the fourth *Georgic* which he made in 1794. In spite of its high literary quality, he never published it, but the first twenty lines are printed in the biography by Forster,[4] who

[4] *Life and Works of Walter Savage Landor*, vol. I, p. 24.

found the translation among Landor's 'papers. And the constant references to Vergil in his letters, the frequent quotations from his writings, and the large amount of criticism of him contained in the *Imaginary Conversations* and in the critical essays on Theocritus and Catullus, are sure proofs of his knowledge of and interest in the greatest of the Latin poets.

Landor was interested in the great writers of the past not merely as authors. He must call them all up before him, and make them talk again in an idiom as nearly their own as possible. But in his re-creation of the personality of Vergil, he has not proved himself equal to the subject, unless it is true that he was consciously representing Vergil's shyness by painting him in the most neutral colors. It would not be remarkable, however, if he had failed to attain to full sympathy with a man of Vergil's nature. A character whose outstanding qualities were modesty and hatred of strife, could hardly be thoroughly understood by a man whose chief delight was in stirring up feuds with his neighbors and cultivating the feeling of being abused. In any case, we have in the dialogue between Virgilius and Horatius a colorless representation of the former, in whom there are no evidences of a genius great enough to write the *Aeneid.* Horace is far more strongly individualized, and it is through his words chiefly that we obtain whatever impression we get of his companion. Some facts we do glean from Vergil's words as to his indebtedness to antiquity and his unwillingness to disturb the religious faith of the people, but these seem rather forced references to his work, and throw little light on his personality. A slight feeling of contempt for the gentle, retiring disposition of the poet tinges the words which Landor puts into the mouth of Porson, with a strange forgetfulness of the third ode of the first book of Horace. "The ancients," he said, "used to give the sea the color

they saw in it, . . . Virgil *blue-green*, as along the coast of Naples and Sorrento: I suspect, from his character, he never went a league off land. He kept usually, both in person and poetry, to the *vada caerulea*." To be absolutely fair, however, the reply of Southey must be added: "But he hoisted purple sails, and the mother of his Aeneas was at the helm."

Vergil was by no means Landor's favorite poet, even among the Romans. Ovid, in his opinion, had the finest imagination of all the ancient Romans, and was more like Homer than Vergil was. Vergil was inferior to Euripides in poetical power, to Lucretius in vigor, to Catullus in elegance and grace. He concedes that all their powers together could not have composed the *Aeneid*, a poem which shortly before he has called the "most mis-shapen of epics." In fact, almost every word of praise is accompanied by a qualifying "but." At the beginning of the *Imaginary Conversations*, Landor cautions the reader against crediting to him any of the opinions which he puts into the mouths of his characters. But when the same estimate is repeated over and over again in different dialogues, the reader begins to think that the personal feeling of the author had something to do with its formulation. Therefore when we read that Messala considered the description of Winter in the third *Georgic*[5] "unworthy of even a secondary poet," with "no selection of topics, no arrangement, no continuity," and that Petrarch said that "of all who have ever dealt with Winter, he is the most frost-bitten," and that in Porson's opinion, "incomparably better is Cowper's Winter than Virgil's, which is indeed a disgrace to the *Georgics*," and that this passage is one of those severely criticized by Horne Tooke, the conclusion is inevitable that Landor himself thought that these lines were poor work. We may there-

[5] Ll. 349–383.

fore fairly take the words which the speakers in his dialogues utter in regard to Vergil as indicative of Landor's own ideas.

Certainly the general impression gained from the first reading of his criticisms of Vergil is that Landor was not very favorably disposed toward him. The destructive criticisms far outnumber the constructive. But upon closer examination of the facts, it becomes clear that this numerical superiority is not as significant as it might seem at first sight. For, as in the case of the remarks on the description of Winter, Landor is prone to dwell upon certain points. Thus he expresses his low opinion of the fourth *Eclogue* many times. It lacks harmony, says Messala; it is a mass of incoherent verses, says Calvus, another contemporary; and men of later periods speak of it as the dullest and poorest poem which Italy has produced, and as a sin for which the author needs to be forgiven. Similarly he records again and again his sense of the unfitness of the episode of Eurydice in the *Georgics*, and of the bathos, the affectation, the inflated language of which Vergil is guilty. In the second place, it is evident that these criticisms are almost entirely on small points. Such and such lines are bad, here is an instance of tautology, of hypallage, of unpleasant repetition of sounds, of anachronism. With an array of examples to prove their validity, which seems formidable until we realize that here again Landor is repeating, and making the same lines do double and even treble duty, statements like these are repeated with annoying insistence, till we are ready to cry out with Boccaccio, "You really have almost put me out of conceit with Virgil."

But here Landor would undoubtedly answer with Petrarch, "I have done a great wrong then both to him and you. Admiration," he continues, "is not the pursuivant to all the steps even of an admirable poet; but respect is

stationary. Attend him when the ploughman is unyoking the sorrowful ox from his companion dead at the furrow; follow him up the arduous ascent where he springs beyond the strides of Lucretius; and close the procession of his glory with the coursers and cars of Elis." Indeed in more general terms, Landor is perfectly ready to praise the stateliness, the gravity (in the true Latin sense), the harmony, rhythm, and boundless variety of Vergil's versification, which "nothing in Latin excels." Although he believes that Vergil's pastorals are almost as inferior to those of Theocritus as Pope's are to his, yet he says, "Even in these there not only are melodious verses, but harmonious sentences, appropriate images, and tender thoughts. Once or twice we find beauties beyond any in Theocritus." Even the *Georgics*, which receive the lion's share of criticism, are "admirable" and contain passages better than any in Catullus, especially that touch of nature in the lines,

> it tristis arator
> maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvencum.
> (*Georg.* 3. 517–8)

While Landor speaks frequently of the faults in construction which mar the *Aeneid*, he awards to it more praise than blame, and is evidently especially impressed by the power of the fourth book. The characters do not always please him. He compares the heroes of the *Aeneid* to the half-extinct frescoes of Raphael, but attributes the indistinctness, not to the ravages of time, but to the deficiency in the genius of the artist. "No man," he says (this time in his own person), "ever formed in his mind an idea of Dido, or perhaps ever wished to form it; particularly on finding her memory so extensive and her years so mature, that she could recollect the arrival of Teucer at Sidon." But later in the same conversation with Abbé Delille, he

says that the passion of Dido is always true to nature; and in the course of his criticism of Catullus, he gives expression in the strongest terms to his admiration of this episode in the "mis-shapen epic," which shows that Landor was not always captious in his criticism, but could express most generously his appreciation of what he really believed was a fine passage. He was thoroughly honest in his opinions, without a doubt; his error lies in lack of proportion. Neither in Catullus, Lucretius, nor Homer, he says, "is there anything so impassioned, and therefore so sublime as the last hours of Dido in the *Aeneid*. Admirably as two Greek poets have represented the tenderness, the anguish, the terrific wrath and vengeance of Medea, all the works they ever wrote contain not the poetry which Virgil has condensed into about one hundred verses: omitting, as we must, those which drop like icicles from the rigid lips of Aeneas; and also the similes which, here as everywhere, sadly interfere with passion. In this place Virgil fought his battle of Actium, which left him poetical supremacy in the Roman world, whatever mutinies and conspiracies may have arisen against him in Germany or elsewhere. . . . Virgil is depreciated by the arrogance of self-sufficient poets, nurtured on coarse fare, and dizzy with home-brewed flattery. Others who have studied more attentively the ancient models, are abler to show his relative station, and readier to venerate his powers. Although we find him incapable of contriving, and more incapable of executing, so magnificent a work as the *Iliad*, yet there are places in his compared with which the grandest in that grand poem lose much of their elevation. Never was there such a whirlwind of passions as Virgil raised on those African shores, amid those rising citadels and departing sails. When the vigorous verses of Lucretius are extolled, no true poet, no sane critic, will assent that the seven or eight examples of the best

are equivalent to this one: even in force of expression, here he falls short of Virgil."

But while Landor clearly knows the poetry of Vergil thoroughly, and is able both to appreciate its beauties and to pick out its faults, he wastes his critical energies upon such futile comparisons as that just quoted, and he misses entirely the deeper significance of the poems. He regards all three, *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, as pieces of literary workmanship, and criticizes them as such. Inconsistencies and anachronisms in the *Aeneid* call for his disapproval, — in the *Aeneid*, a poem admittedly left incomplete, upon the perfecting of which Vergil intended to spend three more years, and which, according to the legend, he asked to have destroyed after his death. His approval is bestowed upon a single line, which he calls "the noblest verse in the Latin language," or upon the episode of Dido's death, or the words of Mezentius to his horse, or the description of a summer storm. But there is no word of the *Eclogues* as the first evidence of a new tradition in Latin poetry, or of the *Aeneid* as a great national poem. He does not seem to have had even the realization that Dante had of the universal significance of the great Roman epic. He is more like the mediaeval rhetoricians and grammarians, with their tendency to pick out individual passages for consideration. Unlike them, however, he feels no blind reverence for everything that Vergil wrote, but blames as well as praises, and is ready to give a reason for the faith that is in him. It is the Romantic method of individual appreciation in criticism. The reign of Aristotle and the "rules" is over.

But in order to realize what that was that Landor missed, compare with this summary of his opinions, the following words of a critic of the last decade of the nineteenth century. In his *Latin Literature*, J. W. Mackail speaks of the

Eclogues as follows: "Their true significance seems to have been at once realized as marking the beginning of a new era; and amid the storm of criticism, laudatory and adverse, which has raged around them for so many ages since, this cardinal fact has always remained prominent. Alike to the humanists or the earlier Renaissance, who found in them the sunrise of a golden age of poetry and the achievement of the Latin conquest over Greece, and to the more recent critics of this century, for whom they represented the echo of an already exhausted convention and the beginning of the decadence of Roman poetry, the *Eclogues* have been the real turning-point, not only between two periods of Latin Literature, but between two worlds." [6] This ability to see the real significance of these poems is not joined with any blindness to their faults, for this passage is followed by one in which their weaknesses are pointed out with an unerring hand. Again, in comparing the following words, which sum up the fundamental qualities of the *Aeneid*, with Landor's estimate of the same poem, consider how much the latter has left unsaid. "The earlier national epics of Naevius and Ennius . . . had originated the idea of making Rome itself . . . the central interest, one might almost say the central figure, of the story. To adapt the Homeric methods to this new purpose, and at the same time to make his epic the vehicle for all his inward broodings over life and fate, for his subtle and delicate psychology, and for that philosophic passion in which all the other motives and springs of life were becoming included, was a task incapable of perfect solution." [7]

The direct influence of Vergil upon Landor is noticeable chiefly in *Gebir*. His style, both in poetry and prose, shows a marked Latin influence, but there is little possibility of

[6] P. 93. [7] Pp. 96–97.

tracing this directly to Vergil. Such participial constructions as occur in the lines,

> Lamented they their toil each night o'erthrown,

or

> Him overcome, her serious voice bespake,

are proofs of the effect upon him of long familiarity with Latin idiom, but not necessarily Vergilian idiom.

But *Gebir* plainly shows Vergilian influence in the narrative itself. This poem is not classical in theme, but is, like Southey's narrative poems, an epic on a "romantic theme with classical or at least unromantic handling." But even the romantic theme is indebted in some degree to the *Aeneid*. The poem begins in the orthodox epic fashion,

> I sing the fates of Gebir.

In the later Latin version, the first words are "Fata cano." The first thirty-four lines of the second book describe the building of the city, and instantly recall the description of the building of Carthage as Aeneas and Achates saw it from the hill which overhung the town.[8] It is impossible to believe that Landor did not have in mind the lines of the Latin poet at the time he was writing these. The Gadites are hard at work preparing a place for their city:

> Some raise the painted pavement, some on wheels
> Draw slow its luminous length, some intersperse
> Salt water through the sordid heaps, and seize
> The flowers and figures starting fresh to view;
> Others rub hard large masses, and essay
> To polish into white what they misdeem
> The growing green of many trackless years.

[8] Cf. Milton's description of the building of Pandemonium, *Par. Lost*, Book I. ll. 670–730.

Far off at intervals the axe resounds
With regular strong stroke, and nearer home
Dull falls the mallet with long labour fringed.
Here arches are discover'd; there huge beams
Resist the hatchet, but in fresher air
Soon drop away: there spreads a marble squared
And smoothen'd; some high pillar for its base
Chose it, which now lies ruin'd in the dust.

While the actual deeds performed are not identical, yet, in view of the spirit of the passage and the use of detail in the description, Vergil's account of the building of Carthage unquestionably furnished a model for the lines quoted above:

instant ardentes Tyrii: pars ducere muros
molirique arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa,
pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco;
iura magistratusque legunt sanctumque senatum.
hic portus alii effodiunt; hic alta theatris
fundamenta locant alii, immanisque columnas
rupibus excidunt, scaenis decora alta futuris.
qualis apes —
(*Aen.* 1. 423–430)

and here follows the typical Vergilian simile which Landor does not make use of.

The third book of *Gebir* is undoubtedly a reminiscence of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. Gebir, conducted by Aroar, as Aeneas by the Sibyl, descends to the Underworld, where he sees the shades of his ancestors enduring punishment. As in Vergil, there is a description of the "happy fields." As Aeneas meets his father, so does Gebir, though the parent of the latter is not in Elysium.

In the sixth book there are two passages in which Landor must have had Vergil in mind. The first is where the nymph promises to tell Tamar

What makes, when Winter comes, the Sun to rest
So soon on Ocean's bed his paler brow,
And night to tarry so at Spring's return.

These are almost the identical words of the bard Iopas, who sang at the banquet which Dido gave in honor of her Trojan guest. He told

quid tantum oceano properent se tingere soles
hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet.
(*Aen.* 1. 745–6)

Again the description of Aetna is very much like that in the third book of the *Aeneid*. The two entire passages should be compared, but the following lines from each will serve for the purposes of illustration.

And now Sicanian Aetna rose to view:
Darkness with light more horrid she confounds,
Baffles the breath and dims the light of day.
. . . . . .
He heard the roar above him, heard the roar
Beneath, and felt it too, as he beheld,
Hurl, from Earth's base, rocks, mountains to the skies.

These are Landor's lines. Vergil's are as follows:

sed horrificis iuxta tonat Aetna ruinis,
. . . . . .
interdum scopulos avulsaque viscera montis
erigit eructans, liquefactaque saxa sub auras
cum gemitu glomerat fundoque exaestuat imo.
. . . . . .
intremere omnem
murmure Trinacriam.
(*Aen.* 3. 571, 575–7, 581–2)

Landor's Latin verse is quite Landorian. Anyone who reads the Latin version of *Gebir*, for instance, and an equal number of lines in the *Aeneid*, consecutively, will be struck at once with the difference in the rhythm of the hexameters. Needless to say, the Roman "wielder of the stateliest measure" has the advantage in smoothness and polish. Yet here in the midst of un-Vergilian measures are many Vergilian phrases and cadences. It was almost inevitable for one who knew his Vergil well, and who wanted to speak in Latin hexameter verse of a wounded breast, to use the words *sub pectore vulnus*, for it is a favorite verse ending of Vergil's, occurring at least four times in the *Aeneid*. The familiar *steteruntque comae* is echoed by Landor, with the same shortening of the *e*, and *fit strepitus, en age rumpe moras*, and *parce tuo generi* are well-known Vergilian expressions. A careful study of the seven books of *Gebirus* has revealed over a dozen verse-tags, and nearly as many phrases at the beginning of lines, which recall Vergil, beside many other word-combinations in other places in the verse, and some echoes that cannot be identified exactly. The proportion is about the same in his other hexameter verse.

Landor's wish that Vergil in particular might be followed by the younger poets, and the following words of Petrarch in the *Pentameron*, sum up Landor's practice and theory in regard to the poems of Vergil: "If younger men were present," said Petrarch, "I would admonish and exhort them to abate no more of their reverence for the Roman poet on the demonstration of his imperfections, than of their love for a parent or guardian who had walked with them far into the country, and had shown them its many beauties and blessings, on his lassitude or his debility. Never will such men receive too much homage. He who can best discover their blemishes, will best appreciate their merit, and most zealously guard their honor."

CHAPTER X

TENNYSON AND THE VICTORIANS

ALTHOUGH Landor was really a Romanticist, he lived to see the great poets of the Victorian era. The continuation of the life of this enthusiastic lover of the classics, is in a sense typical of the continuity of the classical tradition throughout the nineteenth century. For there was no decided break between the Romantic Period and the Victorian Period, although there was a certain growth toward a more complete and scholarly understanding and appreciation of Greek and Latin. It was still a question of individual judgment, but it was the judgment of the individual trained in a scholarly method of historical criticism. Education was no longer the privilege of a small circle, but was rapidly becoming the right of all men, and the reading public was growing apace. It is an indication of the widespread interest in the classics, that translations of the masterpieces of Greek and Latin literature were issued in cheap form, evidently intended to meet the needs and desires of those whose curiosity about them was great, but whose scholarship was not equal to reading them in the original.

With the growing complexity of the life of the nineteenth century, however, and the multiplication of interests, especially in view of the industrial changes that were taking place with such bewildering rapidity and all the alterations in the modes of life and thought that these involved, the classics were in a measure elbowed out of much of the literature of the period. Some writers, like Matthew Arnold, took refuge in the past, and tried to find in the classics or

in the literature of the Middle Ages a protection from the assaults of modern materialism. Others dealt frankly with the new problems, and ignored the old subjects for poetry. Still others, as Shelley had done already, used the classics and stories derived from them for the purpose of discussing the modern questions in an indirect manner. But the knowledge of the classics runs like an undertone through almost all of the literature of the time, expressed or unexpressed. The day of merely formal imitation for the form's sake is gone; the day of sympathetic and for the most part scholarly interpretation and use of the classics for all the various purposes which an author of the many-sided Victorian Period set before him, has come.

The popularity of Greek continued, and the word classicism, used in connection with the latter half of the nineteenth century, immediately suggests the thought of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, of Arnold's *Merope*, of Tennyson's *Ulysses*, and of Browning's *Aristophanes' Apology*. Vergil no longer retained his place as the best of poets; his work was no longer the chief literary influence on the poetry of the time. And yet he was generally known and loved, loved greatly by many men, and perhaps more wisely than ever before. Poets and critics had ceased to assert that the *Aeneid* was greater than the *Iliad* and the *Eclogues* finer than the *Idylls* of Theocritus. At the same time they were beginning to apply a more historical method of criticism and to lay by the severe attacks upon Vergil's poetry for its artificiality. They were coming to see that comparisons of Vergil to Homer or Theocritus or Lucretius or Ovid were futile and worse than futile, for they blinded the critic to the fact that all these poets were distinguished for different qualities, each important in its way, and that there was no real or useful comparison to be made between them. Vergil was admired for what he was rather than

criticized for what he might have been. They might continue to prefer to read one writer rather than another, and in general the Victorians preferred the Greeks, but the days of literary dictatorship, when one man or one group of men said, "This poet only shall be admired and imitated," were gone, it is to be hoped never to return. Vergil was now standing on his own feet, judged by his own merits, not according to "rules" nor yet according to the capricious likes or dislikes of a Romantic opponent of "the artificial." After standing so long in the blaze of two fires, kindled by the zeal of the pseudo-classicists and of those who represented the other extreme of license in poetry as a reaction against their dictates, he was at last free to bask in the warmth of a tolerant and sympathetic criticism, which took his work much as a matter of course, with never a thought of discarding him from the equipment necessary for a basis for the culture of every well-educated man. The classics still formed the main part of the school training of the majority of boys.

A knowledge of his work was necessary above all for any man who intended to lead a public life in the nineteenth century. Latin quotations rolled from the tongues of Parliamentary orators with as much ease as English verses, and it was understood that their auditors comprehended what was said in that ancient tongue with equal facility. In the words of a modern critic speaking of Vergil,[1] "No Englishman should be indifferent to a writer who has been quoted by illustrious Englishmen in every crisis of modern history, by Walpole and Pulteney, by Carteret and Chatham, by Fox and Pitt, by Gladstone and Lowe, by the most eminent statesmen in

[1] Herbert Paul, *Men and Letters: The Classical Poems of Tennyson*, and *The Decay of Classical Quotation*.

the northern island,
Sundered once from all the human race,
Toto divisos orbe Britannos."

And in another essay he says, "In 1866 Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe, both as good scholars as Peel, almost exhausted the second book of the *Aeneid*, and left the Trojan horse without a leg to stand on. Vergil was treated as if he had been a living writer of dispatches, instead of a poet whose language was no longer spoken, and who had been dead nearly nineteen hundred years."

While any detailed consideration of Victorian prose is outside the scope of this book, it is significant of the widespread knowledge of Vergil that there is scarcely a prose writer of the period who does not quote him or allude to him at some time. Dickens, whose books, according to his biographer, contain not one allusion to the classics, is the exception among novelists, for George Eliot quotes Vergil, and Thackeray's stories are full of allusions and references and citations. Andrew Lang, whose name in connection with the classics will always be associated with Homer, says that he does not like much of Vergil's poetry.[2] "Yet," he continues, "must Virgil always appear to us one of the most beautiful and moving figures in the whole of literature. How sweet must have been that personality which can still win our affections, across eighteen hundred years of change, and through the mists of commentaries, and school-books, and traditions!" He charges his poetry with the old romantic condemnation of "imitative." But he especially admires the *Georgics*, "when the poet is carried away into naturalness by the passion for his native land, by the longing for peace after cruel wars, by the joy of a country life." He translates the passage in the second

[2] *Letters on Literature; On Virgil.*

Georgic in which Vergil expresses his longing for a quiet contemplative life, free from public cares, and adds, "It is in passages of this temper that Virgil wins us most, when he speaks for himself and for his age, so distant, and so weary, and so modern; when his own thought, unborrowed and unforced, is wedded to the music of his own unsurpassable style." He says the *Aeneid* is "a beautiful empty world, where no real life stirs, a world that shines with a silver lustre not its own, but borrowed from 'the sun of Greece.'" The poet is himself only here and there, in the Dido episode, and in passages of reflection and description, "as in the beautiful sixth book."

It did not need the phenomenal memory of Macaulay in those days to bear enough of Vergil's hexameters in mind to use them on occasion, although it must be admitted that probably few men would have undertaken, as Macaulay did, to amuse themselves as they walked home from the House of Commons at two o'clock in the morning, by translating Vergil. Macaulay manifested his familiarity with the *Aeneid* also in his amusing *Prophetic Account of a Grand National Epic Poem, to be entitled "The Wellingtoniad," and to be published A.D. 2824*, many of the incidents of which are burlesques of the narrative of Vergil's poem.

These are two phases of the appeal of Vergil to individuals in the Victorian period, and Matthew Arnold represents still another. He sums up his own feeling toward him in his *Essay* on Joubert, in connection with a remark of Joubert's that coupled the names of Vergil and Racine. "And indeed there is something *supreme* in an elegance which exercises such a fascination as Virgil's does; which makes one return to his poems again and again, long after one thinks one has done with them; which makes them one of those books that, to use Joubert's words, 'lure the reader back to them, as the proverb says good wine lures back the wine-bibber.'

And the highest praise Joubert can at last find for Racine is this, that he is the Virgil of the ignorant."

Arnold's prose gives ample evidence of his acquaintance with Vergil in reference and allusion, but the Latin poet has left little impress upon his poetry. *Sohrab and Rustum* is modeled on Homer rather than Vergil, and is to be compared with the *Aeneid* only in things like epic similes, which are common to both the classic poets. Except for the manuscript and translation of Vergil, William Morris gives no indication of Vergilian influence, all his classical material coming to him by way of the Greek, and the Rossettis are far from Vergilian. Swinburne's tastes are almost exclusively Greek. Clough's *Vacation Pastoral* has lines from the *Eclogues* for its mottoes, and the last verse of the tenth *Bucolic* of Vergil serves as the title of one of his poems, and similar conditions may be found in the work of many a Victorian poet. Thus the poetry of the period in general shows no marked Vergilian influence, although the knowledge of his work is implicit in nearly all of it.

Robert Browning is a rather interesting exception. His wife's classical bent was almost entirely Greek. In her *Vision of the Poets*, she speaks thus of Vergil, the only extended mention of him in her poems:

> And Virgil; shade of Mantuan beech
> Did help the shade of bay to reach
>
> And knit around his forehead high;
> For his gods wore less majesty
> Than his brown bees hummed deathlessly.

The lawyers in the *Ring and the Book* quote Vergil frequently, and in two definite ways Browning shows Vergilian influence. His only direct use of the Latin poet is in his poem, *Pan and Luna*, which is an elaboration of three lines

in the third *Georgic*,[3] "a bold rerendering of the myth that Vergil enshrines," as Stopford Brooke calls it. But more interesting than this is an anecdote told by Joaquin Miller, which illustrates the fact that for many nineteenth century critics, it was the meter and style of Vergil that seemed his chief call to fame. Not many would go as far as Coleridge and assert that there was nothing else of value in his verse; but many agree that the molding of a perfect meter and the use of a nearly faultless diction are his greatest achievements. Joaquin Miller tells that he was invited by the Archbishop of Dublin to meet Browning and some other friends. "Two of the Archbishop's beautiful daughters had been riding in the park with the Earl of Aberdeen. 'And did you gallop?' asked Browning of the younger beauty. 'I galloped, Joyce galloped, we galloped all three.' Then we all laughed at the happy and hearty retort, and Browning, beating the time and clang of galloping horses' feet on the table with his fingers, repeated the exact measure in Latin from Virgil; and the Archbishop laughingly took it up, in Latin, where he left off. I then told Browning I had an order — it was my first — for a poem from the *Oxford Magazine*, and would like to borrow the measure and spirit of his 'Good News' for a prairie fire on the plains, driving buffalo and all other life before it into a river. 'Why not borrow from Virgil as I did? He is as rich as one of your gold mines, while I am but a poor scribe.'"[4] And indeed the rhythm and movement of the *Good News*, allowing for the actual difference in the meter, is much like that of certain passages in Vergil. Perhaps the line that Browning quoted to illustrate his measure was the famous

quadripedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum,

[3] *Georg.* 3. 391–3.

[4] *The Complete Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller*. San Francisco, 1897, p. 59. This anecdote is told in a note on the poem, *Kit Carson's Ride*, which is written in Browning's meter.

or that verse which describes Salmoneus,

> demens qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen
> aere et cornipedum pulsu simularet equorum.
> (*Aen.* 6. 590–1)

In the nineteenth century there have been almost innumerable translations of the works of Vergil, a clear indication of the universal knowledge of and interest in his poetry. They have been rendered chiefly into blank verse, although English hexameters and even the Spenserian stanza have been used. Of these, the work of R. and C. R. Kennedy, of John Conington, whose monumental edition of Vergil is the most scholarly yet produced in English, of C. P. Cranch in America, and of J. W. Mackail, deserves especial mention. The last of these, the work of a man who has written much and with profound sympathy on classical subjects, is particularly satisfactory, especially his prose version. It is not so much the work of professed classical scholars that we are interested in, however, as that of men whose names loom large in English poetry. Wordsworth translated a part of the *Aeneid*, and thereby incurred the criticism of Coleridge, and late in life he published a small portion of it. Cowper and Shelley also translated certain small sections of Vergil's work. Doubtless many a poet tried his schoolboy hand at a version of some lines of Vergil, as did some of our American men of letters. But the most ambitious attempt of the nineteenth century was the translation of the *Aeneid* into rhymed fourteeners by William Morris.

Morris was primarily a student of the Middle Ages, and his treatment of classical subjects conformed to the mediaeval method. It is a question which can never be settled just how he would have handled the story of Aeneas if he had used it as a subject for original, independent treatment.

His tendency would probably have been in the direction of Chaucer and the author of the *Eneas;* but as it was, he confined himself to the limits of a translation.

His first approach to Vergil was made in an essentially mediaeval fashion. The stupendous task of making a manuscript of the *Aeneid,* as he had of the Icelandic sagas, Omar Khayyam, and Horace, was half completed in the years 1874–1875. It was written out through the sixth book, with the exception of a few lines at the close. The work was done on vellum, and the pages were to be most elaborately decorated with borders and initials in gold and colors, and ornaments with figures in the text. Twelve half-page drawings were made by Burne-Jones, but the great floriated letters in gold and colors were Morris' own work.

Although the manuscript was left incomplete, it had its fruit in an interest which imposed upon Morris a task fully as great as that of reproducing the original Latin. "As to my illumination work," he wrote to Mr. Murray in March, 1875, "it don't get on just now, not because I shouldn't like to be at it, but because I am doing something else with Virgil, to wit, doing him into English verse: I have got toward the end of the seventh book, and shall finish the whole thing and have it out by the beginning of June, I hope." He had begun the work in the preceding December, and made daily notes of his progress, recording for fourteen weeks the number of lines completed each day. He did not finish the translation as soon as he had hoped, however; it was not until November 4, 1875, that he could write in a letter to Mr. Murray, "The Virgil translation published to-day." But the completion of nearly ten thousand lines in about eleven months necessitated rapid work. According to his record, the smallest number of lines that he translated in one week was three hundred and fifteen, the largest, six hundred and thirty-five.

As was natural, the translation aroused much criticism, both favorable and adverse. It was the work of a man who was in no sense a classical scholar, and it approached Vergil from a side new to the Victorian Latinists. The translator was evidently a man who knew Vergil and loved the story he told, but loved it with the affection of a mediaeval writer of romance rather than that of a nineteenth century student. His attitude was definitely a romantic one, tinged with the ideas of the Middle Ages. J. W. Mackail, in his *Life of William Morris*, defends this attitude.[5] On the other hand, Andrew Lang called both manner and method mistaken. Other critics have taken a more moderate stand, and half blamed, half praised.

For myself, it is a great temptation to use the hackneyed but still expressive words, and say that it is a very pretty poem, but not Vergil. Nothing could be more literal than Morris' rendering of the Latin. The translation follows the original almost line for line. In fact, in all but two of the books, the number of verses in the Latin and in the English is the same, and in those two exceptions, the difference is only one line. He even keeps the half-lines, a fact which shows with what scrupulous care he clung to the original. And yet, in spite of this fidelity, the spirit of the lines is changed. Any effort to transport bodily a great work of literature from antiquity to modern times, and then to deck it out in the garments which belong to still another tradition, is robing, as it were, the Venus de Milo in hoop-skirts or putting a mansard roof on the Parthenon.

The mediaeval flavor is on almost every page of the translation. The arguments of the books furnish good examples,

[5] "He vindicated the claim of the romantic school to a joint ownership with the classicists in the poem which is not only the crowning achievement of classical Latin, but the fountain-head of romanticism in European literature." Vol. I. p. 322.

especially that of the fourth: "Herein is told of the great love of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and the woeful ending of her." One is tempted to use the spelling of Dan Chaucer. And almost any passage, chosen at random, will furnish an illustration, as this from the second book, where Aeneas is endeavoring to persuade his father to fly with him from the doomed city:

And didst thou hope, O father, then that thou being left behind,
My foot would fare? Woe worth the word that in thy mouth I find!
But if the gods are loth one whit of such a town to save,
And thou with constant mind wilt cast in dying Troy-town's grave
Both thee and thine, wide is the door to wend adown such ways;
For Pyrrhus, red with Priam's blood, is hard at hand, who slays
The son before the father's face, the father slays upon
The altar. Holy Mother, then, for this thou ledst me on
Through fire and sword! — that I might see our house filled with the foe,
My father old, Ascanius, Creusa lying low,
All weltering in each other's blood, and murdered wretchedly.
Arms, fellows, arms! the last day's light on vanquished men doth cry.
Ah! give me to the Greeks again, that I may play the play
Another while: not unavenged shall all we die to-day.[6]

The very proper names, such as "Palinure," sometimes take on a strange mediaeval spelling, and the use of quaint archaic words adds to the effect. Instances might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but a few will suffice, such as the translation of *dux* by "Duke," *pono* by "streak," *draco* by "worm," *bello clari* by "mighty under shield," *senectus* by "Eld," *sterno* by "spill," and *infesta pinus* by "fir of fight."

[6] *Aen.* 2. 657–670.

The meter, the old rhymed "fourteener," the suggestion for which Morris may have taken from Chapman or Phaer, approaches the stateliness of the original, but is very monotonous. It lacks the variety of the Vergilian hexameters, and frequently misses entirely metrical effects which command admiration in the Latin.

The exigencies of the rhyme, added to the closeness of the translation, are probably responsible for many of the awkward inversions, clumsy expressions, bad rhythms, and incoherent lines, as well as for the constant use of "do" as an auxiliary verb, and of prepositional phrases instead of the possessive pronoun, such as "hand of him." Many of these rough places might have been smoothed had Morris taken more time for the polishing of his translation. The rapidity with which he turned out his lines allowed such verses as the following to pass unchallenged by his own critical judgment:

> Aeneas caught upon the pass the door-ward's slumber gave,

or

> O'ertopped by Ida, unto those Troy's outcasts happy sign,

or the really wretched opening lines of the ninth book. Nor did it give time to eliminate awkward repetitions, which have no model in the original, such as "how great doth great Orion sweep," or "Venus sore at heart for her sore-wounded son." The obscurity of some of his verses is equal to that in Browning's *Agamemnon*, of which one critic said that he needed the Greek in order to understand the English. Of actual errors there are very few; in a few instances Morris has added something in translation which gives a tone different from that of the original, but such alterations are rare.

While the translation on the whole is a poor translation, it does not lack good qualities. Its fidelity to the Latin

is a great merit, and there are passages which for dignity and simplicity may be favorably compared with the Latin. The passion in Dido's prayer for vengeance rises nearly to the elevation of Vergil's powerful lines, and the spirit of Aeneas' words is admirably caught in the simile,

> As when before the furious South the driven flame doth fall
> Among the corn: or like as when the hill-flood rolls in haste
> To waste the fields and acres glad, the oxen's toil to waste,
> Tearing the headlong woods along, while high upon a stone
> The unready shepherd stands amazed, and hears the sound come on.[7]

But among all the poets of this period, there was only one who caught the real spirit of Vergil and enshrined it in his verse. The others touched him here and there, admired and borrowed his rhythm or a quotable line or two. But Tennyson comprehended all the phases of his genius and remains today the best interpreter of Vergil among the English men of letters. Andrew Lang, writing about Vergil in his *Letters on Literature*, which have already been quoted, said, "There will come no other Virgil, unless his soul, in accordance with his own philosophy, is among us to-day, crowned with years and honours, the singer of 'Ulysses,' of the 'Lotos Eaters,' of 'Tithonus,' and 'Oenone.'"

Much has been said and written about the resemblances between Tennyson and Vergil, and about the indebtedness of the English poet to his Roman predecessor. "Some one once called me the English Virgil," said Tennyson himself with evident pleasure. Indeed more than one has done so. In 1875, in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine*, the Reverend R. D. B. Rawnsley, signing himself "A Lincolnshire Rector," emphasized by means of copious quotations the similarities between the two in their faculty of observing natural phenomena, their love of the sea, their joy in the

[7] *Aen.* 2. 304–308.

pomp and circumstance of war, their tenderness, their melancholy, their philosophy, and their style. In 1891 was published a book called *Illustrations of Tennyson*,[8] by Churton Collins, the threefold purpose of which, according to the Preface, was to trace in Tennyson's poems the imitations of and transferences from other authors, to illustrate his poems, and to point out the connection between ancient and modern literature. Of this book, the entire first chapter is devoted to a comparison between the style of Vergil and that of Tennyson. After a detailed discussion of the similarities between them, with many examples to prove his point, the author sums up his remarks with the following vigorous statement: "In a word, the diction of Tennyson is, in its essential characteristics, as nearly the exact counterpart to that of Virgil as it is possible for verbal expression in one language to be the counterpart of that in another." Ten years later, in an unsigned article in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1901, an elaborate parallel is drawn between the lives of the two men, after the manner of Plutarch. And not only does the writer set forth the resemblances in the events in their lives, as far as we are able to compare them in view of our scanty knowledge about Vergil, but he carries out the comparison to include the similarities in their character, their method of work, their personal appearance, their attitude toward critics and the attitude of critics toward them, their conceptions of their epic heroes, their philosophy, their knowledge of nature, their patriotism, their scholarship, and their language.

These comparisons are interesting chiefly because they show why the work and personality of Vergil so strongly attracted Tennyson. But all these reasons, all the points of sympathetic contact, which have here been elaborated with

[8] Some of this material had already been published in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

such pains, are to be found in the clearest and simplest of forms in the poem *To Virgil*, which Tennyson wrote at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of the Roman poet's death.

Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language, more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word;

Poet of the happy Tityrus piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind;

Light among the vanished ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen every purple Caesar's dome —
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound forever of Imperial Rome —

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd, and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island, sunder'd once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man.

Many have called this one of the most perfect of Tennyson's poems. Certainly there is no other appreciation of the work and genius of Vergil which is more satisfying to a lover of the Mantuan poet, or gives him more delight. Not only does it show at its highest that rare sympathy of Tennyson's with the "vanished ages," but it proves his ability to pick out those qualities, those gifts, those purposes in the Roman which are really significant. Contrast this method of criticism with that of Landor, and see what a different Vergil we have. There is the poet who reached the lowest depths of poor versification in his description of Winter; here is he who is "lord of language," with

All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out in many a golden phrase.

There is the author of the "most mis-shapen of epics;" here is he whose "ocean-roll of rhythm sounds forever of Imperial Rome." Granting that Vergil did not have time to perfect his *Aeneid* as he would have wished, the question is, where the emphasis should be placed. Is it fairer to Vergil to remember him as a writer guilty of incongruities, bathos, incoherence, and puerilities, or as the

Light among the vanished ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more?

Surely Vergil finds his true interpreter in Tennyson rather than in Landor; Tennyson loved him since his day began. He loved him and knew him. The ode is almost a translation, not of the poems of Vergil, but of that personality which was the aspect of the Roman poet which most powerfully attracted Andrew Lang. As Frederick W. H. Myers has said, "Apart from the specific allusions, almost every phrase recalls some intimate magic, some incommunicable

fire." [9] The praise is not merely verbal and perfunctory; it rests on a firm foundation of thorough knowledge. When Tennyson was asked what he meant by the "lonely word," he gave as an example the well-known *cunctantem ramum*, which has been so frequently assailed by critics of Vergil. But Tennyson was right, for it is actually one of the most remarkably significant phrases in the whole *Aeneid*, in its suggestion of Aeneas' eager haste.

But perhaps even more than the "landscape-lover," or the "chanter of the Pollio," or even the "light among the vanished ages," Vergil was to Tennyson the

Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man.

This very Ode is Tennyson's most successful attempt to approach the "ocean-roll of rhythm" of the Latin. His friends bear witness to the delight he took in reading or reciting favorite hexameters. "He was perpetually quoting Homer and Vergil," wrote Henry Graham Dakyns,[10] "and to my mind there was nothing for grandeur of sound like his pronunciation of Latin and Greek as he recited whole passages or single lines in illustration of some point, of metre, perhaps, or thought, or feeling. . . . Then how he rolled out his Vergil, giving first the thunder, then the wash of the sea in the lines:

> fluctus uti medio coepit cum albescere ponto,
> longius ex altoque sinum trahit, utque volutus
> ad terras immane sonat per saxa neque ipso
> monte minor procumbit, at ima exaestuat unda
> verticibus nigramque alte subiectat harenam."
>
> (*Georg.* 3. 237–41)

[9] Quoted in *Alfred Lord Tennyson. A Memoir*, by his Son. Vol. II, pp. 481–4.

[10] *Tennyson, Clough, and the Classics*, in *Tennyson and his Friends*.

And his son adds as other favorite lines of his father's, those sounding ones in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*,

> demens qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen
> aere et cornipedum pulsu simularet equorum,
> (*Aen.* 6. 590–1)

and

> Romanos rerum dominos gentemque togatam.
> (*Aen.* 1. 282)

In *The Daisy* Tennyson himself tells how

> we past
> From Como, when the light was gray,
> And in my head for half the day,
> The rich Virgilian rustic measure
> Of Lari Maxume, all the way,
> Like ballad-burthen music kept.[11]

Tennyson frequently compared the movement of Milton's poetry with that of Vergil's. "Milton had evidently studied Virgil's verse," he said once to Warren, President of Magdalen, Oxford; and again in connection with a similar remark, "If Virgil is to be translated, it ought to be in this elaborate kind of blank verse." It is an interesting commentary on Tennyson's attitude toward the classics that he made only one attempt at translation, a short passage from the *Iliad*. Vergil he did not try to render into English, or at least left no evidence of ever having done so. The conditional clause in the remark quoted above shows that he believed that the poems were better left undisturbed in their original tongue.

It is interesting too that while he admired so greatly the Latin hexameters, he considered that hexameters in English

[11] Cf. *Georg.* 2. 159 ff.

were a "barbarous experiment." He would probably have agreed with Landor, who said, "English and German hexameters sound as a heavy cart sounds, bouncing over boulders." Tennyson was interested in making experiments in various other Latin meters, the Alcaic, the hendecasyllabic, and even the difficult and remarkable galliambic. This shows how sensitive he was to sound and rhythm, and explains why the sonorous majesty of the Vergilian meter appealed to him so strongly. But for his own dignified and serious epic poems, he preferred the English blank verse, which he wielded in stately fashion; yet he never equalled the ocean-roll of the Roman master of rhythm, except in the long lines of the *Ode*.

Of the echoes of Vergilian lines and phrases which are numerous in Tennyson's poetry, and of the allusions to the *Aeneid*, the *Georgics*, and the *Eclogues*, I wish to say very little. Many of the parallels were pointed out by Tennyson himself in the notes which he left with his son, who also added others. Some of them were intentional paraphrases and translations, such as

> This way and that dividing the swift mind;

some merely accidental parallels or unconscious echoes of lines which had become almost Tennyson's own through long familiarity with them. Careful and complete work along this line has been done by Churton Collins in his *Illustrations of Tennyson*, published in 1891, and by W. P. Mustard in his *Classical Echoes in Tennyson*, 1904, and to them I refer anyone who is eager to investigate these reminiscences further. The value of such collections is to emphasize what we are already aware of, Tennyson's love for the classics and his enormous learning. There are one or two passages, however, striking enough to warrant mention here. In the *Idylls of the King*, there are a number of

reminiscences of the Dido episode. Compare, for example, the lines in *Geraint and Enid*, which tell how she

> ever failed to draw
> The quiet night into her blood,

with those which describe the distress of the Carthaginian queen:

> neque umquam
> solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem
> accipit.
> (*Aen.* 4. 529–531)

Less close is the parallel in the following:

> Death like a friend's voice from a distant field
> Approaching through the darkness, call'd; the owls
> Wailing, had power upon her, and she mixt
> Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
> Of evening, and the moanings of the wind,

where there are clear echoes of the Vergilian lines,

> hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis
> visa viri nox cum terras obscura teneret;
> solaque culminibus ferali carmine bulbo
> saepe queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces.
> (*Aen.* 4. 460–3)

Most interesting of all is the poem *Will*, the spirit of which is precisely that of Vergil's

> quidquid erit, superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est,
> (*Aen.* 5. 710)

and of his reported saying, which rests on the authority of Donatus, "that no virtue is more useful to a man than patience, and that there is no lot so hard that a brave man

cannot conquer it by bearing it wisely." Hence Tennyson's strong-willed man,

> Who seems a promontory of rock
> That, compressed round by turbulent sound,
> In middle ocean meets the surging shock
> Tempest-buffeted,

is fitly described with the help of a simile which comes straight from Vergil,

> ille velut rupes vastum quae prodit in aequor,
> obvia ventorum furiis expostaque ponto,
> vim cunctam atque minas perfert caelique marisque
> ipsa immota manens.
>
> (*Aen.* 10. 693–6)

On the whole the investigation of the classical reminiscences in Tennyson has led to the conclusion that he is more indebted to Vergil than to anyone else, with the possible exception of Homer and Horace. But many of the "faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth," are due to the requirements of the subjects of his poems, such as *Oenone* and the *Lotos Eaters*, and many of the Horatian phrases had become commonplaces. The nature of the Vergilian echoes more than any others would indicate that Tennyson had absorbed and assimilated the Vergilian material, that he had lived with Vergil rather than studied him.

So it is quite fitting that the consideration of the influence of Vergil should close with Tennyson, who is the last of the great poets of England to show in a decided form the effect of his Vergilian reading, and is the poet who, more than any other, can be called Vergilian. It is not only the echoes and reminiscences of the poems of Vergil in his work that make him important in the history of the influence of the

Roman poet upon the English writers. It is the instinctive sympathy between them, the innate resemblance that made so many men agree in calling him the English Vergil. Many another poet has been more imitative of Vergil than he, many another has quoted him more frequently. But no one has penetrated so deeply into the Vergilian spirit, and no one has expressed it so fully as Tennyson in his poem *To Virgil*. The Roman poet takes in the poetry of Tennyson somewhat the same place that the Bible has taken in the literature of England for so many centuries. One scarcely thinks of separating the quotations in either case from their context and calling attention to them by inverted commas.

And Tennyson will probably be the last poet to show marked Vergilian influence, painful as the admission is to a lover of the classics. But rare is the man in these days, unless he is a student or teacher of the classics, who sits down each night, as Dr. Johnson did, and reads through a book of Vergil, and hardly less rare the writer who carries in his memory more than a few of the most familiar Vergilian lines. There are still some echoes in our modern prose and poetry of famous phrases, like *lacrimae rerum*, *varium et mutabile semper femina*, or *arma virumque*, and there will continue to be as long as Vergil is read in school and college. But although a recent volume of poetry bears the title, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*,[12] how many will recognize its origin? We shall miss much of our inheritance if the influence of the classics is taken from our future poetry. We shall miss more if we lose the ability to feel the presence of the great minds and spirits of antiquity in the literature that England has already produced. If Vergil becomes merely a name to the reader of English poetry, much of the

[12] William Butler Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. N. Y., 1918.

work of Spenser, Milton and Tennyson will lose its meaning, if not its beauty. He will have to forego part of the potential enjoyment of poetry who cannot say as he reads it,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man.

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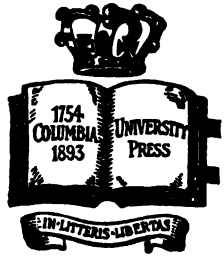

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